

Encounter

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A New Symposium

GOING INTO EUROPE AGAIN?

Arnold Toynbee
A. J. P. Taylor
Aidan Crawley
William Hayter
Joan Robinson
Anthony Powell
Kenneth Younger
Nicholas Kaldor
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John Sparrow
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Exile's Delight

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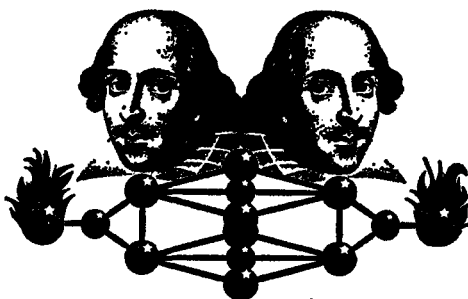
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Going into Europe—Again?

IT WAS in the summer of 1962—incredible that it is almost a decade ago!—that we sent out our first invitations to British writers for the ENCOUNTER symposium “Going into Europe.”

The results—some 117 intellectual statements: pro, contra and indifferent—were published in four instalments in ENCOUNTER. The dates were: December 1962, January, February, March 1963; the curious reader may want to refresh his memory.

We have been pressed from various sides to return to this theme. There is apparently great curiosity about the state of British intellectual opinion today on the subject of “Going into Europe.” Has there been much changing of minds? Have critics become proponents, and have partisans grown cooler? Has the experience of the last decades of “going it alone” confirmed or denied the predictions about the dangers or advantages of British “isolation” or sovereignty? Is the large historical perspective of a more unified European community still attractive, still viable?

We have invited most of those who participated in the original symposium to review their own views, and to let us have a brief statement of their attitude today. In addition, we have asked a number of others to give us a personal estimate of the general state of intellectual and public opinion on the European question, past and present.

A second instalment will be published next month, for as we go to press, we have received contributions from, among others, Kingsley Amis, Sir Peter Medawar, Samuel Brittan, Colin Wilson, Donald Tyerman, Michael Shanks, Brian Crozier, George Mikes, Rayner Heppenstall, George Gale, Kathleen Nott, Yehudi Menuhin, Nancy Mitford, Arnold Wesker, Colin Clark.

A Symposium

Arnold Toynbee¹

I AM JUST AS EAGER to see Britain gain entry into the EEC as I was when I took part in the ENCOUNTER symposium of 1963.

I should still be eager for this, even if it were demonstrated to me that it would be disadvantageous to Britain economically. I should be willing to see Britain pay quite a high economic price for retrieving the blunder that she made in letting slip her opportunity to be one of the founding members of EEC. Big blunders do cost a big price, but it is always better to pay the price for blunders than to fail to retrieve them.

I do not have the technical knowledge for offering any useful opinion about the haggling. The longer that it goes on, and the more dogged and sordid it becomes, the more I dislike and despise it. Not only the British but all Westerners, including the French and other Continental European Westerners, are a super-nation of shopkeepers. This is one of the Western civilisation's repulsive features.

However, it is not surprising that the Six and Britain should be haggling with each other in this unedifying way. We West Europeans invented modern nationalism. For five centuries, each West European nation has been conditioning itself

deliberately to be nationally self-centred. What is remarkable, and also encouraging, is that, since the end of the Second World War, we have realised that nationalism is not enough and have begun, however grudgingly, to feel and think and act on supra-national lines. Western Europe has infected the rest of the World with nationalism. If we manage now to take the lead in surmounting nationalism, we may perhaps partly atone for the damage that we have done by disseminating this social and moral disease.

The European nations are fortunate in happening to be bunched together in a compact geographical block in which none of the component nations is so outstandingly powerful, compared to the others, that it would be able to dominate a European union. It is thus in the European nations' power, if they have the will, to form an association in which, severally as well as collectively, they will once again have some say in the management of the world's affairs in this critical stage of mankind's history. The Japanese would think themselves lucky if they had a similar opportunity of becoming members of a regional group of nations of the same calibre as Japan.

Europe, united, could hold its own in a world that contains giants of the stature of the U.S., the U.S.S.R., and China. On the other hand, each European nation singly is too small to be able to survive in isolation in the present-day world. It looks to me as if the world is heading

¹ ARNOLD TOYNBEE, historian, author of *A Study of History* (twelve volumes) and other works.

towards convulsions and catastrophes that may make World Wars I and II seem like comparatively mild tribulations. Divided, the European nations might go under; united, we should have some chance of coming through.

BEING A EUROPEAN, I am perhaps unduly partial to the Western civilisation that Europeans have created. The non-Western majority of my fellow human beings may write off my opinion as being mere prejudice. All the same, I do believe that, in spite of its repulsive greed and graspingness, this civilisation has some valuable achievements to offer to the rest of the world. I therefore think that it would be a misfortune for the world, as well as for Europe, if the European nations were to founder through failing to unite. Single nations are expendable; a united Europe, too, would be expendable; but mankind as a whole is not expendable. I put my treasure in mankind, not in a united Europe for its own sake, and still less in an isolated Britain. I value Europe and Britain in so far as they may have something useful to contribute to the welfare of the human race.

This is my reason for wishing to see EEC succeed; and, because I wish it to succeed, I hope that Britain and the other candidates for membership will be able to agree with the Six on terms of admission. The negotiations will fail unless all parties raise their sights. We must break with our habit of behaving like hucksters. Petty-mindedness and short-sightedness are usually self-defeating. The most effective way of serving our short-term self-centred national and regional interests is to forget about them. We shall do the best for ourselves if we make our grandchildren's interests and mankind's interests our paramount concern.

A. J. P. Taylor²

THERE IS NO British opinion about "going into Europe" intellectual or otherwise. No one understands it. No one cares about it, for or against, except perhaps for a few politicians who have taken up the affair as a means of professional advancement. Maybe it is the most decisive moment in British history since the Norman conquest or the loss of America. No one takes any notice all the same. Everyone is agreed that entry into the Common Market will cost this country a great deal of money. The cost of living will go up drastically. Sterling will be again devalued. Our former friends in the Dominions and elsewhere will be ruined. This does not seem to cause any anxiety. The Common Market is presented on the simple ticket that it is better to do the wrong thing than to do nothing. At least something will happen, whether good or bad.

My own view is that the disadvantages are obvious and that the advantages have not been shown. They are so much pie in the sky like any other act of faith. Some economists say there will be gains. Some say there will be losses.

Some do not know what will happen. How can the ordinary man be expected to make up his mind with such guidance? The only solid argument is the fantasy that by supposedly getting free entry into a larger market this country will inevitably benefit. This is pure speculation. A country already progressing would go up even without entering the Common Market. A country stagnating is more likely to go down.

Political association with Europe is even more of a dead duck than economic association. There is no belief whatever that Europe or still less this country is in imminent peril. The military men who find a justification for their existence in NATO are the only ones who claim that Communism will get us if we do not watch out, and they do not believe it. We could wind up our connection with NATO tomorrow without the slightest risk to our national security. The idea of creating a united Western Europe which could challenge the United States is equally remote from reality. Indeed American finance has largely taken over Europe already, and we shall assist the process by going into the Common Market.

A policy which has nothing to be said in its favour might be expected to collapse of its own weight. This is unlikely to happen. Satan finds some mischief still for idle hands to do, and we are plagued by busybodies who can never leave well alone. The cranks who have pushed us into decimal coinage and will soon push us into metrication will also no doubt push us into Europe. This brings them titles and salaries and high positions. They can sit on interminable committees, drive around in official cars, and make free trips all over Europe. They will have a happy life when they are all officials of the Common Market. The people will be bored by these activities and will acquiesce in them. Entry into Europe is the greatest non-question of all time. Those who have made a fine mess of our affairs will make an even greater mess of them by going into Europe. Everyone knows this and is resigned to it.

Aidan Crawley³

TEN YEARS has made the Common Market less popular but more important than ever. De Gaulle's rejection of the British application to join and the slow progress made since Mr Wilson's government re-applied have caused resentment which cannot be overcome until the present government wins acceptable terms of entry and can sell them to the people.

Yet the terms are far less important than the opponents of entry make out. If civilisation is to

² A. J. P. TAYLOR, historian, author of *The Course of German History* (1945), *The Hapsburg Monarchy* (1948), *The Origins of the Second World War* (1961), *English History* (1965).

³ AIDAN CRAWLEY, former Labour (and Conservative) M.P., President of London Weekend Television.

continue without a world-wide relapse into tyranny, it is most likely to do so through the creation of a Western European Community.

The effort to emerge from the narrow nationalism of the last four hundred years, to find an inspiration more broadly humane than patriotism, to think less parochially about daily life, while retaining our identity as individuals or as a group, demands a political maturity which perhaps only the countries of Western Europe possess.

If these countries meet the challenge, then government by consent may continue to be the civilised political ideal. If they fail—and without the expansion of the European Community which we are trying to achieve they will fail—that ideal will sooner or later be eclipsed by one of the innumerable forms of tyranny which are spreading across the globe. In a divided Western Europe, dominated by the presence of the Soviet army, it would almost certainly take the form of a socialist dictatorship.

The immediate economic price of entry into the Common Market will be forgotten in the economic expansion which will follow. But that price is irrelevant compared with the importance of creating a united and more tolerant Western Europe.

William Hayter⁴

I SEE THAT in 1962 I wrote that “in a few years we shall have to make an unconditional surrender to get in.” I am afraid those few years have gone by, and now it is not even certain that an unconditional surrender will get us in. The French, though more polite and more circuitous than in the General’s time, seem determined to keep us out; that is, they say they want us in but continually pose conditions designed to keep us out.

I hope I am wrong about this. No one likes making unconditional surrenders, but it is possible that even that might be better than not entering. Everyone keeps describing to us, at great and mostly unintelligible length, the advantages and disadvantages of entry; no one, in public at any rate, seems to be trying to work out what happens if we don’t get in. We go on as we are, presumably; do we like the idea of that?

I cannot see that the arguments in favour of entry have changed since 1962. I do not pretend to understand the economic case, and I am only consoled for this by the obvious fact that the economic experts don’t understand it either. The political arguments are the ones that counted and

still count for me. The trouble is, we have all got bored with them and with the whole subject. It has all gone on too long, and now nobody cares about it much either way. I suspect this means we shall not get in; the French will make the conditions impossible, and we shall just shrug our shoulders. But I wish I knew what happens to us after that.

Joan Robinson⁵

I FEEL MORE STRONGLY than ever that the most important aspect of the affair is our treatment of the countries of the ex-Empire in particular and of the Third World in general. In the past we brought into existence whole populations, for instance in the sugar colonies, to serve the British market and to make profits for British business. Now we are to be asked to switch our purchases to European farmers. In the Indian sub-continent the primitive industry was destroyed and modern industry hampered by rigid insistence on free trade, to the benefit of British exports. Now that the successor nations might develop exports of their own, we are to be asked to keep them out. It is sometimes argued that if only the UK joined EEC we should make it more “outward looking.” At the formative stage this might have been true, but as things are now it is much more likely that we should have to take over the policies and the ideology of the Six.

As far as our own economic interests are concerned, the agricultural policy of EEC is deleterious. England went through the trauma of liquidating the peasantry in the eighteenth century and there is no benefit to us in paying a subscription to help in the inept manner in which the problem is being handled in Europe.

It is generally admitted nowadays that to join would put a heavy burden on our economy in general and our balance of payments in particular, but we are told “in the long run” we should reap advantages. This type of argument is based on a fallacy. The “long run” does not exist apart from the process of reaching it. The proximate cause of our relatively slow industrial growth (whatever may be the deeper reasons) has been the weakness of our balance of payments. A further deterioration in our international position in the present is not calculated to set us on the path of “dynamic growth” in the future.

The feebleness of the case that is made out for joining EEC indicates that hidden psychological and political motives are at work. One, no doubt, is nostalgia for the status of a Great Power. Since we cannot be one on our own, let us at least have a share in one. My own feelings are quite opposed to this point of view. I think that,

I THINK writers are better occupied getting on with their books than making collective pronouncements on political matters.

Anthony Powell⁶

⁴ SIR WILLIAM HAYTER, Warden of New College, Oxford; former British Ambassador to Moscow.

⁵ JOAN ROBINSON, Professor of Economics, University of Cambridge, author of *Essays in the Theory of Economic Growth* (1963), and *The Cultural Revolution in China* (1969).

⁶ ANTHONY POWELL, critic, and author of *The Music of Time* novel sequence (10 volumes).

as empires go, the British Empire was not discreditable and that to give it up (in the main) without a fight was a very unusual example of common sense. Let us now have enough sense to accept the position of a small country and try to show the world how to preserve some elements of civilisation and decency that the large ones are rapidly stamping out.

Kenneth Younger⁷

I BELIEVE, as I did in 1963, that if Britain's attempt to join an enlarged Community is finally blocked, relations among the Western countries will be seriously damaged and that Britain's influence in world affairs will be diminished. Both these results followed from the veto of January 1963 and would be accentuated by a failure in 1971-2.

Since 1963 Britain's major industrial firms have moved increasingly into Europe. Britain's defence effort is now overwhelmingly concentrated in Western Europe and the waters around it; Britain's currency has more than once been rescued by a group of countries among whom her European neighbours have been prominent. Against this background, which is unlikely to change, it seems absurd for Britain not to seek for herself a place within the political and economic decision-making institutions of Western Europe, where so much of her fate will in any event be decided.

The last decade has made it doubly clear that neither the "special relationship" with Washington nor the Commonwealth can offer Britain an appropriate share in an effective decision-making partnership. What is still valuable in these old relationships can in fact probably be given more vitality if Britain becomes a part of a substantial European community than if she remains in precarious isolation from any power grouping, which is the only alternative available to her. Her only sensible policy is therefore to join the EEC.

The terms set out for entry could, of course, be so disadvantageous to Britain in the short run that she would be compelled to reject them; but it is not in the interests of the EEC to admit a new member on terms which would be ruinous to her and would, therefore, impose a burden on the community after enlargement. This is a negotiation not between adversaries but between prospective future partners, all of whom must want the partnership as a whole to be prosperous. I, therefore, believe that tolerable terms for the transition will eventually be agreed. Even if there is an initial deadlock, the negotiations will later

⁷ KENNETH YOUNGER, former Labour M.P. and Minister, Director of the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House).

⁸ NICHOLAS KALDOR, Professor of Economics at Cambridge University, former adviser to the Prime Minister in the Wilson Labour government.

⁹ SIR HUGH CASSON, architect, Professor of Interior Design, Royal College of Art, author of *Homes by the Million* (1947), *Inscape* (1968).

be renewed, because in the longer run none of the parties have any other policy available to them which answers so well to their future political, strategic, and economic necessities.

It is no wonder that there should be emotional resistance to this development both in France, where the spirit of Gaullism still clings to the hope for a Europe dominated by French culture and language, and in Britain, so much of whose national history has for some four hundred years been enacted at "the ends of the earth". Both these attitudes are understandable but anachronistic. They have nothing to do with the 21st century, which is almost upon us, and I very much hope that they will not succeed in thwarting the present attempt to join Britain and her continental neighbours in a process of integration from which all their peoples stand to benefit.

Nicholas Kaldor⁸

I WAS SURPRISED to read what I wrote in 1963 and find that my views then were so similar to my present views on this subject at least as far as economics is concerned. I have no objection to your reprinting what I wrote in March 1963 and indicating that these are still my views—at least as regards the economic aspects; I am less certain in regard to the political aspects.

HOW HUMILIATING to have to admit that I have not given this question a second thought since being asked it in your symposium of 1963. I suppose it was this, plus my priggish disregard for those intellectuals who at that time either protested, often at some length, their inability to understand the implications—what are intellectuals for?—or who, from the shelter of a comfortably cushioned chair, said the matter was of little interest since for them life will go on just as before—that forces me now to have a point of view.

Stifling an inborn mistrust of foreigners, of large groupings and of productivity paper-chases, and nerving myself to resign—after a lifetime membership—from the Leave-Things-As-They-Are Society, I opt without flippancy for "Going In" because (1) A national shake-up of this scale is likely to be healthy—or at least interesting—in its side effects, if not in its direct purpose; and (2) it's bound to happen anyway, so why not lie back and enjoy it?

Incidentally, if the pace of negotiations goes no faster than it has done in my profession of architecture—nearly ten years so far of earnest and inconclusive attempts to agree upon mutual recognition of professional qualifications, educational systems, and codes of practice—then it is unlikely that any reader of this symposium will live to see it.

Hugh Casson⁹

Geoffrey Gorer¹⁰

I FIND I am still in basic agreement with what I wrote in 1962 (apart from the last paragraph; I am no longer a farmer) and don't think I could express it better today.

John Sparrow¹¹

F LATTERED as I am to be asked to contribute to your symposium about "Going into Europe", I am afraid I cannot supply you with a useful answer. This is a topic about which I am both ignorant and undecided.

I don't know which side I ought to be on and I don't even know which side I *am* on. Two instincts, however, pull me in opposite directions, and I feel that the pull towards Europe is the stronger.

Norman Macrae¹²

WHEN WE CONTRIBUTED to this symposium in 1962-63, those of us who argued the economic case for entry feared that a Britain outside EEC would prove to have too small a home market to go forward efficiently into the "newest industries and technologies." This applied to small makers of things like particular machine tools (who in a Britain-on-its-own have to choose to be tied as component-makers to perhaps a single big firm, or who else tend to spread their production among too many penny packets) as much as it did to the technological giants like Rolls-Royce (who would find themselves caught in the same dilemma as the small machine tool makers). The economists who opposed entry were led by Nikky Kaldor, who said that

"on the contrary, if we do not give up our independence in economic, monetary and financial matters we could raise our strength considerably by a vigorous policy of comprehensive economic planning."

During Britain's near-decade outside EEC since then, the fears of those of us who advocated entry seem to me to have been fulfilled beyond our worst expectations; while the hopes of Dr Kaldor and his school seem to me to have been proven to be ill-founded.

I agree that economic questions ought to become less important in the next decades, and social problems more important. I suspect that they are social problems that will need stronger and more imaginative action from central govern-

ment; and it is therefore disturbing that the Six are forming what, once there is free movement of labour, will fortunately become a United States of Europe, while unfortunately pretending to each other that this U.S.E. will not need a central government at all. But, because man is still so greedy, it is economic considerations that will in fact decide what we do. It is going to become steadily more evident that the industries in which a tolerably rich Britain could still retain a comparative international advantage in 1980, in 1990, in 2000, are industries that will prosper only in a big market like Europe. So Britain will join EEC sometime, even if not now.

The old manufacturing industries will be

AFTER A GOOD DEAL of indecision, I am now convinced that we ought to go into Europe.

I find it impossible to reach any conclusion about the economic arguments. As usual, economists are putting forward contradictory cases with unqualified confidence, and I don't possess the training to distinguish between them. Most of us can't begin to rely on our own a priori thought: the best we can do is to attach the greater weight to the opinions of those who have generally turned out right, and vice versa. Judged by that criterion, the pro's appear to have it, but it is a pretty near thing.

That, however, is not the reason which has removed me, firmly and irreversibly, from a comfortable position on the fence. The reason is quite different, very simple, and a hope rather than a calculation. The decisive issue of the next two generations is not the rate of growth of production in the rich countries, but what happens to the poor ones, meaning at present two-thirds of the human race. Unless the poor countries can be lifted out of the most brutal hardships, and unless the world population can be stabilised, then the outlook is black: and that is the most inadequate of understatements.

The only hope for Englishmen, and in particular for the intelligent young (whose attitudes have influenced me more than any others) is to go into Europe so as to be able to look outwards and play their part in what is, by the nature of things, going to be their world. It may be a tenuous hope. Europe, even an enlarged Europe, may come to look inwards as much as this country has been doing for two decades. If so, then it will become a rich man's enclave, and of no interest. The young have to gamble that they, and their European contemporaries, can prevent this happening. It is a long gamble: but it is the only one that they can take. I am sure that they are right to take it.

C. P. Snow¹³

¹⁰ GEOFFREY GORER, anthropologist, author of *The Americans* (1948), *Exploring English Character* (1955).

¹¹ JOHN SPARROW, Warden of All Souls College, Oxford, author of *Controversial Essays* (1966).

¹² NORMAN MACRAE, Deputy Editor of *The Economist*, author of *The Neurotic Trillionaire* (1970).

¹³ LORD SNOW, novelist and scientist, author of *The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution* (1959) and *Strangers and Brothers* (11 volumes).

increasingly moved to cheaper labour countries, propelled there by multi-national corporations (European-based as well as American-based) and aided by the container revolution. Already "American" TV sets, sold in America under American trade names, are in fact mostly manufactured in S.E. Asia. Of course, all other industries of the Henry Ford age up to and including motor car manufacture are gradually going to move the same way, especially when the automobile switches over from being pollutant-petrol-driven to being (probably) electrical. The new knowledge-producing and information-processing businesses of the post-industrial age, which are the businesses on which richer countries will concentrate, will initially be carried on mainly within four fairly self-protectionist blocs—North America, Europe, Japan, and the limping Soviet bloc—with the protection for these infant post-industrial businesses carried on by means other than tariffs (e.g. by forward placing of both public and private research contracts *etc.*—look at the Japanese to see how it's going to be done).

It will be crazy for Britain to stay outside one or other of these new protective rich blocs of the post-industrial age; and, as the realisation of this will sink home before we have quite lost our rather good infra-structure for becoming a leading post-industrialised knowledge-producing area, we will in fact sooner or later join Europe. But it had much better be sooner.

The contribution of British economists to this debate—most of them have concentrated on micro-economic nit-picking in an assumedly static situation, at a time when these dynamic changes are in visible convulsion all round us—seems to me to have been a grim commentary on the present tatty state of British economic science.

Cecil Harmsworth King¹⁴

MY WIFE AND I were recently at a dinner party in Paris where we met Monsieur and Madame Couve de Murville just back from an official visit to Peking. Madame Couve told us that a senior Chinese official had told her how important it was that Britain should join the Common Market: without Britain Western Europe was too weak to be effective and that the future of civilisation as we know it depends not on America, still less on Russia but on Western Europe.

I cannot myself take such a detached and global view but from the point of view of this country and of Western Europe surely we must get together. This is not a question of the price

of butter, it is the only way forward through which we can have any say in the future of the world. The alternative is for us to become a relatively impoverished and insignificant off-shore island dreaming of the days when we were once a world power.

For four hundred years we have turned our backs on Europe and have sought our fortune on the oceans of the world. Mr Enoch Powell suggests we should continue to do so, but now these oceans are dominated by the Russians and the Americans, no longer by the British Navy.

While we have turned our backs on Europe and treated the whole world as our oyster, we have learnt much and forgotten much. And now is the time to put our imperial past behind us and to bring to Western Europe, of which geography insists we are a part, all the wisdom and experience gained from centuries of trading and other contacts with the whole world. And in

YELLOWED WITH AGE among dusty files, there is an article I wrote more than eight years ago for ENCOUNTER. It reads: Yellowed with age among dusty files, there is an article I wrote more than twelve years ago (in October 1950, to be precise), for the New York Times.

"In 1940," it says, "after the fall of Paris, Winston Churchill proposed the unification of the French and British Empires by a simple stroke of the pen. When the danger was past, the lesson was forgotten. In 1948, after Stalin's seizure of Czechoslovakia, Ernest Bevin declared that Europe must unite or perish. Since then, he and his colleagues have acted as if they had chosen the second alternative. Political federation, we have been told, is premature; it must be preceded by economic integration. But when the Schumann plan of economic integration was presented, it was declared unacceptable because it would entail a sacrifice in political sovereignty. And so it goes on. . . ."

And so it goes on. However, owing to the progress of modern science, there is a third alternative in sight. Once Labour has won the election—thanks to the inspired slogan "United We Fall, Divided We Rule," sung to the tune of the Intra-national—all they will have to do is to enlist a battalion of frogmen. The frogmen will cut the moorings of these islands, and tow them to Botany Bay, or the shores of New Zealand. Thus the Commonwealth will regain that intimate, close-knit texture which it is in danger of losing owing to the hazards of geography. A last alternative would be to have us towed close to New York harbour—on condition that the United States, in appreciation of Mr Gaitskell's reference to "a thousand years of British History," are willing to rescind the Declaration of Independence.

Arthur Koestler¹⁵

¹⁴ CECIL HARMSWORTH KING, publisher, former Chairman of the International Publishing Corporation (Daily Mirror group).

¹⁵ ARTHUR KOESTLER, author of *Darkness at Noon* (1940), *Reflections on Hanging* (1956), *The Sleepwalkers* (1959), *The Act of Creation* (1964), and other books.

Europe we have much to learn—in art, in trade, industry and science but above all in the art of living.

The world grows smaller every year—New Zealand is as near as Edinburgh once was. The facilities for learning foreign languages make bilingualism far easier than it used to be. The fragmentation of our political world in spite of the growing integration of the industrial world makes less and less sense. Our culture has always been European to which we have made a full contribution but from which we have drawn from all our neighbours. The argument that we should lose our sovereignty is increasingly meaningless at a time when the world is becoming increasingly inter-dependent. The shoe is really on the other foot—if we don't integrate ourselves with Europe our sovereignty will be reduced to whatever the larger groupings choose to leave us.

Harry G. Johnson¹⁶

I WAS DOUBTFUL about the economic benefits of joining Europe right from the start, back in 1956—witness a back-of-the-envelope calculation I published in *The Manchester School* (1958), which showed that under the terms then being considered (a European free trade association) Britain's gains would be very small. Since then, the EEC has produced the monumental nonsense of the Common Agricultural Policy, and a set of rules for members' contributions to the central funds—both of which together guarantee a magnitude of economic loss from membership that can only be contemplated in the desperate hope that a kick in the pants with a steel-tipped boot will turn this lethargic society into an economic three-and-a-half minute miler.

The standard argument of the pro-Europeans is that the economic costs will (a) be compensated for by faster growth, and whether so or not, will (b) be well worth paying as the price of the political gains. The politics of the situation are, therefore, worth reviewing at this point.

When the idea of a United Europe first began to be seriously discussed, there were two main objectives in mind. The first was to prevent a Third World War being started by European rivalries, by forming a political union within which differences would necessarily be resolved by peaceful political means. The second was to preserve Europe's influence in world affairs by creating a civilised super-power capable of dealing in superior terms with the emergent barbarian giants of world politics, the USA and the USSR. Both objectives were shared by the Americans, who naively believed that their own pattern of submer-

gence of European nationalities into a super-national state would ensue on a European Federation, and that such a Federation would be an unquestioningly loyal ally against the Russians.

Neither of these objectives makes much, if any, international political sense now. Europe is no longer the focal point of world politics. A European war is very improbable in the extreme; and if one were started, the rest of the world would be very unlikely to take sides and throw in its military resources in support of one or another European country. Instead, the Russians and Americans would attempt to use their influence in Europe to put out the fire, or at least contain it to the dimensions of a local blaze. The focal point of world politics is the relations between the Russians and the Americans. These two countries have reached an understanding, the major

SINCE 1945 I have been in favour of British entry into a united Europe. I still am. My reasons have remained the same, though different reasons have dominated my mind at different times.

Reason One arose from the stench, wreckage and misery of Europe in 1945, which bred in me a determination that such a dreadful civil war (for so I even then regarded it) must never be allowed to happen again. French, Germans, Italians, Dutch, Belgians, British and others—this was our home. In it we must henceforth live in concord, bound together by appropriate free institutions.

Reason Two sprang from *Reason One*: the need to protect this home from its massive enemy to the East, and from such other enemies as may in future arise. This little peninsula at the West end of the Asiatic land mass—how precious, how vulnerable it seemed and seems to me! Its woods and fields and rivers, its cities and cathedrals, its splendours and castles, its mountains, inns and valleys have always appeared to me not alien but my own; its peoples not strangers but brothers. I weep to think of what is already lost: Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Hungary and other points East, not forgetting holy Russia herself. Who could contemplate without horror the loss of a single acre more, still less the subjection of all that remains to an eastern tyranny?

Reason Three, the economic one, is at present under a bit of a cloud. The blessings in this field are heavily disguised; they may not flow at once; and what we shall have to pay for them in the meantime! Faith is required. Yet I remain convinced that the larger market, the wider international division of labour, will in the end bring increased prosperity to us all. Has it ever failed to do so elsewhere in the past?

Colin Welch¹⁷

¹⁶ HARRY G. JOHNSON, Professor of Economics at the Universities of London and of Chicago, author of *Money, Trade & Economic Growth* (1962), *The Less Developed Countries* (1967).

¹⁷ COLIN WELCH, journalist, Deputy Editor of the *Daily Telegraph* (London).

threat to which is not in Europe but, on the one hand, in Arab-Israeli relations in the Middle East, and on the other hand, in the emergence of China and the prospective emergence of India as comparable super-powers. The creation of a European Super State would serve no visible international political interest. Even if it would, the time required to effect it is far longer than is relevant to any conceivable purpose to be served.

WHY, THEN, the belief that it is now politically urgent for Britain to get into Europe? The answer, in my judgment, is to be found in the mechanics of anachronism. Britain gave up a far-flung and hard-won Empire with political grace and decency. But British society has never really become used to living within its own political size. In the first flush of post-Imperial self-congratulation, the British elite lived on the strength of the myth of superior international political talent, expressed concretely in the belief in a special capacity to deal with the Americans while remaining on good terms with the Russians. Hence Britain stood apart from the movement for European political unity in the phase when British leadership *could* have made an important difference. The conversion to enthusiasm for Europe, as reflected in the 1962-63 ENCOUNTER symposium, was in my view largely a consequence of the attempt and failure of Suez. This convinced many of the country's opinion-leaders that Britain possessed no moral superiority over other nations, no independent international political power, and no special influence with the United States. The natural reaction was to look around for a new empire to provide the desired power base; and the traditionally-despised Continent suggested itself as the natural prey for a British pluck. This attitude was encouraged by the Kennedy Administration, whose "Grand Design" for a Euro-American partnership was mistakenly interpreted as offering a new and important political role for Britain, instead of being seen as the subtle cover for an American retreat into inter-war isolation that in fact it was.

Whether one accepts that hindsight interpretation of the "Grand Design" or not, the fact remains that British opinion-leaders have remained struck with a view of what Europe means and of what Britain's role in it might be that is nearly a decade out-of-date. And that view itself represents a quarter-century lag on State Department thinking about how to make Europe useful in the cold war against the Russians in the circumstances following on World War II.

THE FOREGOING REMARKS implicitly portray the changes in my own thinking on "Europe" that have occurred since the last ENCOUNTER symposium. Reading that symposium in Chicago, after living through the Suez adventure in Manchester

(with the help of the post-Imperial conscience of *The Manchester Guardian*), I was struck by the wishful thinking and escapism of those in this country who thought that "going into Europe" could turn back the clock and validate the self-respecting assumptions of an élite still being trained to manage a no-longer-existent Empire. Thinking about the "Grand Design" in Chicago, after eleven years of teaching and living in Britain, I was struck by how firmly the concept was rooted in the old-fashioned "melting-pot" and isolationist tradition of America.

Returning to this country just in time to observe the unfolding of Harold Wilson's conversion to Europeanism, I was struck first by the ignoble thought that he was doing it *only* to keep out of the newspaper headlines the size of the unemployment he had to create to stave off the devaluation of the pound, and more profoundly by the complete unreality of the then-prevalent assumption that all Britain had to do was to crook her finger for Europe to come running to the banner of "British leadership". We are now beginning to realise the economic costs that the stupidity of European arrangements will impose on us; but, in typical British fashion, we are trying to make another Dunkirk out of it, and to pretend that suffering and survival at any cost represent the highest of moral virtues.

In my view, membership in the Common Market will not solve our economic problems, but, if anything, will divert our attention from appropriate solutions. And there is no hope of recreating the old Empire on the basis of the mythical loyalty of the Germans, Italians, and French to the ideals of British democracy and the superior moral training provided on the playing fields of Eton. What this country mostly needs is to get used to the idea that it can solve its internal economic problems with its own brains if it will only use them—instead of allowing them to dream of the arrival of Prince Charming or the Black Raider; that it is now only a middle-sized power and must behave accordingly—but that a middle-sized power can exercise influence in world affairs well beyond its political and economic power base if it will only be its own honest and experienced self. "Getting into Europe" is a euphemism for keeping out of touch with reality.

T. R. Fyvel¹⁸

LOOKING BACK AT what I wrote in 1962 and earlier, I am surprised to note what a romantic "post-imperialist" I was in those days when reshaping international relationships seemed more hopeful than it does today. From 1940 on I had advocated a "Green Revolution" whereby Britain (of course with enlightened U.S. financial backing) would carry out radical reform and launch industrialisation plans *before* handing self-government to her teeming Afro-Asian dependencies, India at the head. What happened showed that this was just not on, not anywhere. For Britain

¹⁸ T. R. FYVEL, journalist and broadcaster, author of *The Malady and the Vision* (1940), *The Insecure Offenders* (1961) and *Intellectuals Today* (1968).

there had been the Empire, and then the Commonwealth was nothing—nothing tangible to hold on to, anyway, in Britain's search for her new role. In 1962 I therefore supported British entry into the EEC. In practice, thanks to de Gaulle but not only to him, this move failed twice. Now we witness the third attempt. De Gaulle, the individual obstructor, is gone, but otherwise we are older; ideals including European Federation have faded, and everything has got worse: Britain's economy, the stiff entry terms by the Six, Europe's political confidence, that of the U.S., the world situation. What should one say about this third attempt?

Even so, if the final entry terms turn out to be reasonable (if not, there is admittedly nothing to be said) I would still advocate two guarded cheers for British entry, because for both domestic and international reasons it seems preferable to Britain "going it alone".

Domestically, just as the Continental countries benefited from a fresh start, with often brand-new industrial plant and methods, after the upheavals of Hitler's war, so Britain still needs to be jerked violently from a stance whose rigidity sometimes still seems that of 1940, when Britain stood on the brink, simultaneously alone against the enemy and at the head of an Empire on which the sun never set. There is probably consensus that British industrialists, the trade unions, the politicians, the Civil Servants, even in part the City and all, need to be dragged painfully into accepting the realities of competitive life on middle power status. The argument is whether such British modernisation can be achieved better by Common Market membership, or alone.

Psychological and economic factors are here hard to disentangle. Some people see EEC membership as a positive danger if treated as another gimmick for evading the necessity that Britain herself must put her house in order. But is this danger great? I think, on the contrary, that the future looks more daunting if Britain has all on her own to solve those recurring problems which have made her post-war story so different from those of economically successful non-EEC countries like Sweden and Switzerland. As said so often, these problems basically derive from the outdated equipment and methods of much of British industry and the consequent peculiarly British fate "stop-go", i.e., brief bursts of British economic growth leading monotonously to inflation, import excesses and flights of capital, the balance being corrected by harsh Government deflationary measures, which in their turn slow up industrial investment, so that each cycle left Britain further behind.

By now, ALL THIS has induced a certain despondency about Britain's competitiveness, which a breakdown of EEC entry negotiations would not lessen. Indeed, on a pessimistic reckoning, the picture of Britain continuing on her own could

include certain unpleasant facets: stop-go might go on, causing Britain to lag still further in modernisation and income per head; unemployment could linger and outlying British regions far from the European centre, like the North-West, Scotland and Ulster, might continue in their decline.

All this need not happen, but even the possibility that it may gives the issue of British EEC entry its urgency. True, such entry would not by itself magically reverse the trends mentioned; true entry may involve high costs, dislocations for British agriculture and consumers, and constraints on British economic freedom. But these constraints would also be directed against freedom of British employers to run outdated businesses and of British workers to strike regardless of consequences. Indeed, I believe that the shocks and constraint following EEC entry, whether through closer competition with a fast-growth area, freer movement of capital and labour between Britain and the Continent, through pressure from the Brussels technocrats or the need to align British finance and tax policies with the Six—that all

IN ENCOUNTER's first symposium on the Common Market eight years ago, I was one of those who favoured entry. I now oppose it.

I then argued that, owing to their "gluey inefficiency", both British capitalism and British socialism needed to be given sharp enough competition to make them start working seriously. I dismissed the possibility of our ever really obeying a parliament in Brussels as chimerical.

The economic argument has lost much of its force. The political slope, on the other hand, looks a good deal more slippery.

Political considerations—that is, the principles of our whole civic culture—should in any case override the economic. The direction in which Britain should seek closer ties is within its own tradition of language, law, and politics; that is, with the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland and the Caribbean Commonwealth countries. (An economic approach to this had long since been suggested by Douglas Jay and others.) We would be able to exert a stronger influence on decisions, and play a weightier part in the world, as a major component of such a new union.

And now that the United States has virtually admitted its inability to cope more or less alone with world problems, it too has a motive for a larger union of this sort. I would also argue that a United Europe without us would be stronger and safer under the protection of a much larger and more powerful "Anglo-Saxon" union than if further increased in size and power itself, and so more liable to the dangerous delusions of the "Third Force" idea.

Robert Conquest¹⁹

¹⁹ ROBERT CONQUEST, historian and poet, author of *The Great Terror* (1968), *Russia after Khrushchev*, etc.

these pressures, by shaking up some long-cherished sluggish British attitudes, should make British modernisation a goal easier to attain than if Britain remained on her own.

On the international plane, too, the old arguments for closer European integration have been replaced by new, quite possibly weightier arguments. True, the original design of containing German nationalism, the chief single cause of two World Wars, has long been overtaken. Soviet colonialism apart, Europe has fewer political and economic problems than any other area. But this is precisely the new point. If today's international problems, such as the growing gap between the advanced and the underdeveloped countries, have become global, dwarfing those of Europe—if from having been a source of wars Europe has so surprisingly turned into an area of stability—this makes the need to strengthen a stable Europe further not less, but greater.

After all, recent years have shown that the underdeveloped countries, India not excluded, have truly gigantic political problems, of unprecedented population increase, of the continuing gap between *élite* and mass, of poverty and educational backwardness, which make Europe's troubles look petty. This has become apparent just as the ability of the super-powers to provide aid and guidelines has for the time been put into question. The current obsessive American self-doubts over their failure in Viet Nam and the problems of race and urban poverty at home are likely to accelerate the drift towards neo-isolation, with self-preoccupation rather than any Kennedy-style Grand Design shaping Washington's thought. Soviet Russia, meanwhile, half a century after the Revolution, has a government bankrupt of ideas, has censorship and consumer queues, a gigantic military apparatus, an alienated intelligentsia, and no ideological sway even over Marxists abroad. China as super-power remains the great unknown, but with her youth probably brainwashed and patently chauvinist. There is Japan, but that's another story. At any rate, it is my strong feeling that, as seen from the European capitals, and for that matter from Brussels, the needs of the underdeveloped countries and also their political sensibilities and the limits of aid are today better understood than by the super-powers.

THIS DOES NOT MEAN an ambitious role, once perhaps imagined, of an integrated Europe as a sort of Shadow Super-power, arbitrating between East and West. But realistically there is both room and urgent need for the European powers, aligned as a political unit representing an area of wealth and stability, to play a part once again in the shaping of international affairs, especially in renewing more intimate relations with the Third

World, where this would probably be welcomed. Again the accession of Britain and other countries to the EEC cannot immediately result in a politically integrated Europe. The drift in Europe towards national separatism, often dreary, has gone on for too long and Moscow must always be reckoned with; European political integration as an ideal is dim and, as a goal, long-term. But success in enlarging the EEC by Britain and other countries would be an important step forward. It would mean a hopeful change of direction in European politics, a renewal of European confidence commensurate with renewed strength and stability, greater chances of providing European economic aid and political ideas. It would be a pity if any new parochialism in France—and in Britain—impeded this step.

Frank Norman²⁰

THE FERVENTLY nationalistic views that I once held with regard to the U.K. joining the Common Market have now cooled—I no longer subscribe to the derisive old adage that: "Wogs begin at Calais." Indeed, it now seems far truer to say that: "Economic growth, a more civilised way of life, a reasonably contented working class, more attractive modern architecture, friendlier people (with the exception of the French), less pollution, delicious food, *molto* suggestive vistas and *vino* at 10p a litre etc. begin at Calais. . . ."

General de Gaulle is no longer around to say: "Non!" So we would be well advised to get in quickly before the country goes bankrupt—the Market seems now to be the only cure for our sickness. But if our membership does nothing else, it will almost certainly force the government's hand in the matter of liberalising the public licensing laws, so that militant trade unionists and wilcat strikers will be able to pass the time pleasantly while they hold the country to ransom—the Industrial Relations Bill notwithstanding.

Marghanita Laski²¹

NEGATIVELY, first, where else can we go? Going it alone for a decade has led us to a divisive ferment of cultural extremism, fertile compost for *mysticismus*, skin-flicks, and Powellism. The United States seems progressively sicker and more inadequate, a caricature, in both best and worst, of the potentially most destructive tendencies in Britain. Dreams of a decade ago about playing a creative role in a multi-racial commonwealth have become absurd, degraded not only by our racial intolerances at home and our obvious preferences in Africa, but also by racial intolerances in the rest of the Commonwealth. We have no affinities with either Communist bloc or with the Third World.

²⁰ FRANK NORMAN, author of *Bang to Rights* (1958), *Fings Ain't Wot they Used T'be* (1960), and *The Guntz* (1962).

²¹ MARGHANITA LASKI, author of *Ecstasy* (1961), *Jane Austen* (1969).

On the positive side, Europe is presently the highest civilisation in the world—which is a long way from saying it's the highest civilisation the world could have hoped for by now. Joining Europe could do us good; any other choice must do us bad.

Raymond Williams²²

I'M SORRY, but if you are taking a poll on the apparently existing choices—to “go into Europe” or to “stay out of the Common Market”—I can't register. It is clear that the EEC, for the foreseeable future, is a mode of capitalist integration and what is called modernisation. I have opposed these policies as practised by British Labour and Tory governments, and I see no virtue in their geographical extension. At the same time I don't intend joining the extraordinary alliance of public anti-marketeters, with their alternative of continued British “independence” and “sovereignty”. After the experience of the '60s, schemes for an independent social-democratic Britain seem to me no more than a familiar kind of Labour fantasy, while the reality of the international corporations makes any proposal for what is called, misleadingly, a “commonwealth” grouping equally unrealistic. The degree of traditionalism and chauvinism in some of the anti-Market campaigning is very worrying though not surprising.

Where then do I stand and work? I think the English ruling class has only two choices, over the next decade: a political assent to the economic reorganisation and integration which is now going on in Western Europe, or an economic assent to increasing subordination to United States capitalism. Under Labour or Tory governments, one or other of these roads will be taken, and the only question for socialists is how to oppose not the form of this choice but its content. Since in any foreseeable circumstances we shall not ourselves be making this choice, but responding day-by-day to its consequences, it seems to me foolish to be trapped into the terms of other people's arguments. I can see marginally greater opportunities for some of the developments I hope to help make happen if the Market choice is the one that is made. There would be a better basis for the now urgently necessary international trade unionism, and a noticeably better basis for breaking some of the locks in English culture on which the present political hegemony depends. As British socialists

we have more in common with our Italian and Scandinavian and French and German comrades than with any other active movements, mainly because of common traditions of political and working-class organisation. Much more than half of our work, nevertheless, will have to be directed to the general problems of imperialism, in a much wider area, and to the problems of change in Eastern Europe. Thus although we would be helped to make some new working arrangements, we would not be able to solve our main problems within a Western European grouping alone.

At the same time I can see more immediate opportunities for socialist work of an already known kind if the political option for the Market is made. The alternative, of increasing subordination to the United States, would almost certainly bring about more far-reaching and fundamental changes in British society and its economy, almost all of them very damaging. It is possible that in that kind of crisis a different and more radical socialist option would open. The opportunities, some would say, are then as great as the risks of that continuing course.

I CANNOT REALLY SUPPOSE that ENCOUNTER would want this issue judged in terms of its possible openings for socialist organisation and action. But these are the only terms in which I now see what is so misleadingly called the “choice”. The nation-state is being very rapidly surpassed, in certain decisive areas of its economic life, by the development of the international corporations and by the whole character of neo-colonialism. To fall back on limited ideas of what can be done on our own in Britain is to miss the whole problem. The best feature of the new socialist movements of the 1960s was the combination of ideas of direct democracy, in social groupings much smaller than the old nation-state, and of an active and flexible and frontier-crossing internationalism. In the hard years immediately ahead, when the task of developing these movements is the only political issue that matters, we shall indeed be thinking about and working in Europe, but about and in a different Europe from any the orthodox campaigns now see or propose.

NO FURTHER reflections on this theme since 1962, except to note that before the mammoth debate about “joining Europe” began, we seemed much more European than we have become after discussing, for a decade, whether or not we are.

Colin MacInnes²³

I DOUBT IF I can add anything to what I said before. I still feel the same, basically, except that I dislike people rather more.

Ian Nairn²⁴

²² RAYMOND WILLIAMS, author of *Culture and Politics* (1958), *The Long Revolution* (1961), *George Orwell* (1970), fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge.

²³ COLIN MACINNES, novelist, author of *Absolute Beginners* (1959), *City of Spades* (1957), *Westward to Laughter* (1970).

²⁴ IAN NAIRN, critic, previously editor of *The Architectural Review*, now Environmental Correspondent on the *Sunday Times* (London).

John Braine²⁵

IF I WERE an editor, nothing would induce me to publish even one short article about the Common Market, let alone a symposium. It bores me stiff. I'm sure that I speak for the majority here, not even excluding professional politicians and economists.

It might be different if negotiations hadn't dragged on for so long, or if there seemed any way of public opinion influencing them in the slightest. It might be different if one could perceive any benefit to this country from joining the Common Market. Once we were given to understand, as clearly as we're ever given to understand anything in connection with the subject, that it was only General de Gaulle who was holding everything up. But his departure from the scene appears not to have had the least effect, except that now there are references from France to the British sense of humour. We're not treated to the jokes which evinced this reference, but I suppose they'd be above our heads.

Yes, I am against our entering the Common Market, if only because it means an addition to our already swollen bureaucracy. More important still, it will mean the irretrievable breakdown of our national sovereignty and a further dwindling of our personal freedom. My instincts tell me this, and my instincts are never wrong.

I've made my protest, as I'm in duty bound. It's completely futile, naturally. As futile as protests against decimal coinage were, as futile as protests against going metric will be. How we've reached this stage I don't know. It's as if, irrespective of whatever party formed the government, the real power were in the hands of a new species of human being. It isn't that they don't care what we want. They simply don't comprehend. The gap between us is too great. And I'm afraid that this symposium won't decrease it.

E. J. Mishan²⁶

THERE IS AN INFATUATION about the idea of marriage to the Six which, like most such infatuations, cannot stand up to scrutiny. Cultural advantages? Hardly! There is nothing to prevent any of us spending as much time as we like in European capitals soaking up all the culture we can absorb. Military advantages? None that could not as well be secured by treaty. As for the prospect of forming a third political power able to "stand up to" the Americans or the Russians, even if it were not illusory, it would hardly make the world any safer. Does the average American feel any prouder or any more secure than, say, the average Swede?

²⁵ JOHN BRAINE, novelist, author of *Room at the Top* (1957), *Stay With Me Till Morning* (1970).

²⁶ E. J. MISHAN, economist, author of *Twenty-One Popular Economic Fallacies* (1969), and *Welfare Economics* (1970).

There are no economic advantages either. Although the City expects to make a mint of money, food prices will certainly rise. On balance of payments account we shall be worse off, and the changeover to a value-added tax will act further to reduce the "real" income of workers and pensioners.

The assertions of Lord Gladwyn (*et al.*) to the effect that, by joining the Six, our growth performance must improve are pure moonshine. No theoretical proposition, no empirical evidence can be adduced to support this forlorn hope. Customs unions just cannot be counted on to promote economic growth. In fact the years prior to 1958 saw all of the Six countries with faster growth rates than after their formal union.

Pro-Marketeers, in this country, many of them half frantic with fantasies of massive technological opportunities, have become increasingly impatient over the last few months of mundane considerations such as the costs of foodstuffs, monetary regulations, and changes in legal and political institutions, all of which however, have very real and immediate effects on the lives of ordinary people. They assert that there is "no future for Britain" outside the EEC, insisting that it is not the price of butter that matters but the really large gains of an "intangible" or, better, "dynamic" nature which we shall reap in the long run. So long as these alleged gains remain intangible, unmeasurable, and indeed, unspecified, no one can contradict them. And, however interpreted, so long as they are to be realised only "in the long run" none of us will live long enough to disprove them.

The real issue is political, and here the pro-Marketeers habitually prevaricate. On the one hand we are told that Britain has scarcely any sovereignty to lose anyway. On the other hand, we are assured that the political aspects of the Rome Treaty will not really come into operation—at least not for a long time—and that, therefore, we shall not have to make any fundamental changes in our constitution.

But there can be no fudging a constitutional change of this magnitude. If we are really counting on the political union remaining a dead letter, we had better make it explicit, indeed conditional on our entry—if that is not a contradiction itself. But assuming, as the present citizens of Europe do, that the EEC is not so much about "business" as about "politics", entry into the European Union means quite simply that this country takes the momentous and irrevocable decision to dissolve itself as a sovereign power. Britain cannot "lead Europe" simply because Britain will no longer exist—except as one of ten or more states in a Federal Europe.

FROM THE FACT THAT the sovereignty of this or any country is exercised subject to the constraints of international realities one does not infer that sovereignty is effectively non-existent. It is because we are still sovereign that we can devalue our currency or change to a floating exchange rate

if a balance-of-payments deficit becomes chronic. It is because we are a sovereign nation that we can control the influx of immigrants and plan the location of our industries. It is because we are a sovereign nation that we can enter into economic agreements or form political pacts with any country in the world. One could indeed fill a dozen pages with the things we should no longer be able to do of our own accord, once wedded to the Continent—if not immediately, then sooner or later.

Finally, and contrary to glib assertion, the Common Market is not a “forward-looking” Union. It turns men’s thoughts and energies away from the pressing problems of the twentieth century and into fashioning political and administrative machinery to serve the economic dogmas and political designs of an era that is past. Nor need we fear any decline in our influence among nations if we decide to take our own path into the future. It is not by political or economic power alone that influence is exerted. We can lead again, as we have done before, by the light of example; by pioneering new institutions in order to realise concepts of sane and dignified living.

TO CARRY ON a great tradition of radical social reform Britain must refuse to be drawn into the universal gold rush that today is squandering this planet’s finite resources at a reckless pace in order to produce technical trivia for the jaded appetites of the affluent societies of the West. And the first step along an independent path will be taken when we bend our will to the task of facing up to a complex of grave social and environmental problems; problems that indeed result from and are aggravated by the pressures generated by economic growth; problems that are therefore particularly acute just now in America—the Mecca of growthmen. In taking the first step, and not in the European Common Market, lies the challenge of today and the hope for tomorrow.

Brian Glanville²⁷

READING MY ORIGINAL contribution at so distant a remove, I was surprised to find how little my opinions had changed. It was Lord Falkland, early in the Civil War, who said that, “When it is not time to change, then it is time not to change,” and Orwell who called the English “the laziest people in Europe.” Both propositions seem to me, in context, highly valid.

Proponents of the Common Market with its high prices for farm products, its shameful surpluses, can give us remarkably little concrete evidence of how and why we should be better off. I have in front of me, as I write, an article published the other day by one of them, boldly headed, “Why we should take the Continental

cure,” but dissolving, at the last, into mere incantation. Competition in and from Europe *might* shake out the cobwebs and take in the slack from our economy, it might drag our bone-headed Trade Unions, with their endlessly Gadarene tendencies, into the latter twentieth century. It might, a still more remote chance, erode the class barriers and attitudes which are still the curse of our society. But why should it?

Ruskin described political economy as “the science of nescience.” It might be truer to say that it is no science at all, but a mere arsenal of hopeful guesses, dubious predictions, conflicting orthodoxies. This is probably inevitable, given the deeply irrational nature of money and its ways. Nobody *knows* what will happen to Britain, if she goes into the Common Market. At this moment, her economic position is a series of extraordinary paradoxes. Thus, unemployment is high, strikes are endemic, inflation appalling, yet reserves are vast, and the pound has reached its highest quotation for years.

Meanwhile, a tendency has emerged which was by no means evident at the time of ENCOUNTER’s first questionnaire, one so surprising as to cast further doubt on any kind of prognosis. I am referring to the trend towards fragmentation, differentiation, nationalism, rather than union. It was to be expected that growing centralisation, the dramatic improvement of communications, the development of computers, satellites, electronics, would inevitably mean the galloping disappearance of local characteristics and differences. But it hasn’t happened. Thus, in Ulster the bitter antipathy between Catholics and Protestants is as great as ever. In Belgium, the Walloons and the Flemish continue to detest each other. In Russia, the Tartars and the rest continue to agitate bravely for their right to be separate. In Britain, Welsh and Scottish nationalism is vigorously, if anachronistically, active.

By and large, I regard this as deeply reassuring. We have not yet, despite the prevalence of the machine, the horrors of television, been reduced to a grey, conforming sameness. Reggio Calabria continues to resent Catanzaro, Liverpool to detest Everton. Supporters of Britain’s entry into the Common Market might embrace this as an argument, saying that our integrity, our uniqueness, were not in danger. I prefer to think that this movement towards fission, rather than fusion, should carry us away from Europe, instead of towards it, with its ultimate dangers of political union imposed by governments, acting against the wishes of their peoples.

Besides, and this is perhaps the most important consideration of all, Britain is an island, with all that is implied—not just pejoratively—by the insular mentality, its special consciousness of independence. I am sure that public opinion in this country (God knows about intellectual opinion) would be against joining the Common Market, which seems a fair reason for staying out; though on the other hand, it would no doubt also be in favour of hanging; one must be careful of being hoist with one’s own petard.

²⁷ BRIAN GLANVILLE, novelist and sports writer (on the *Sunday Times*), author of *The Olympian* (1969) and *A Cry of Crickets* (1970).

I have not forgotten what's left of the Commonwealth, above all New Zealand. *Pace* the late Mr Gaitskell's rather unconvincing rhetoric, I still think it would be appalling to desert and doom the economy of a country whose young we gladly offered up in two world wars. And if this is mere sentiment, I have yet to be convinced that the case for our entry into Europe rests on logic.

Peter Calvocoressi²⁸

MY VIEWS in general remain what they were 10 years ago but my attitude to the question has changed.

I remain in favour of a closer association of this country with its neighbours. I think such an association would be good for us and, conversely, that the failure to achieve it will narrow our vision and so in time our capacities and what is rather vaguely, but none the less understandably, called the quality of life. I think that the achievement of such an association requires the removal of political frontiers and the down-grading of some national institutions (which are however not the same as national identities). I believe that much mingling is already going on, specially among the young, but I do not regard this trend as irreversible without some degree of political integration.

I remain, too, foxed by the economic arguments. I cannot say whether, over the long term (whatever that is), we shall gain or lose by joining the EEC and I note that economists are either in disagreement or hopelessly vague about the prospect. Since I do not believe that Ministers are better instructed on the economic balance, I conclude that the case which they make for entry is really a political case in economic dress. Although I share their political predilections on this issue, I deplore the fraudulent way in which it is being presented—fraudulent because what is clearly very uncertain is being promoted as arcanelly profitable. The element of gamble is much greater than is allowed to appear and much greater than has ever been regarded as justifiable in the conduct of public affairs. Let us gamble if we want to, but not with our eyes half closed by those whose business it is to open them.

This is why my attitude to the question you put has changed, even though my attitude to "Europe" remains what it was. First, at the political level (but not, let me make it clear, among the officials principally concerned) the operation now has a disagreeable taint of sleight of hand. "Europe" has to be put across before it can be joined. This, however, is a comment on our political leadership,

not on the substance of the case itself. Secondly, on the substance, I have a distinct feeling of unreality. Over the past few months it has been borne in on me that we are not going to join now anyway. This makes me a poor commentator because I have become bored by the whole debate. Nevertheless let me say why.

IT SEEMS TO ME that British business and the bulk of its managers are too incompetent to be able to afford unprotected competition with German business. I do not know if this was the case ten years ago, but by now the continuing decline in profit margins and so in investment capital and opportunities (which businessmen like to blame on governments or unions or both, but which must be at least partly their own fault) has placed the British economy at so precarious a disadvantage that the amalgamation of these economies could too easily lead, not to mutually profitable intercourse, but to the ravishing of the British market by German manufacturers. I see a parallel with the post-war convertibility crisis when, at that time in a deal with the USA, we took a step which we were not strong enough to take and were forced, ignominiously and swiftly, to reverse. There are of course British manufacturers who can benefit and they are naturally in favour of entry into the EEC; and it has always been assumed that there would be others who could not compete and would go to the wall. The question is, how many of each? To which side of the fatal divide will the bulk, who are neither obviously in good enough trim nor obviously in bad enough trim, incline? Nobody knows, but it is by now at least arguable that the failures will be too many. Where the EEC used to be a convenient way of clearing out an expendable number of weaker brethren whose bankruptcy would be no bad thing for the economy as a whole, joining now could prove a far more lethal operation than that—lethal not merely to particular businesses but to so many particular businesses as to be lethal to the British economy.

I repeat that I do not know the answer to the question I have just put. But I do not need to, for I conclude that it is at least plausible to assume a pessimistic answer and in that case the very fear of the damage that could be done will, whether justified or not, make joining "politically impossible." We have now a Conservative government, and a Conservative government is naturally responsive to the perceived interests of the business community, including the *menu peuple* in that community; and so since the general election I have expected—so far, I admit, without seeing it happen—an anti-EEC swing to develop in the governing party. I still do and that is why the whole question has become to me unreal.

Finally, and in particular, it now has nothing to do with what the French government wants or does not want and the idea, canvassed over recent weeks, of a meeting between Mr Heath and President Pompidou to unlock the door is a total irrelevance.

²⁸ PETER CALVOCORESSI, Reader in International Relations at Sussex University, author of *Nuremberg* (1947), *South Africa & World Opinion* (1961), *Politics since 1945* (1968).

H. J. Eysenck²⁹

GOING INTO EUROPE is obviously an act of faith; one needs only to look at the convoluted and contradictory arguments put forward by economists to see that rational projections are not very useful in helping one to make up one's mind. My belief that we should join in with the other European countries is based fundamentally on the fairly obvious fact that small national units are gradually becoming uneconomic to operate and may cease to be viable. A polluted stone set in a detergent-froth sea may appeal to the conservative working-class, but one doubts whether it has a future. (Left-wing intellectuals like to pretend that it is the middle-class who are conservative, the working-class who are progressive. Extensive empirical studies of social attitudes I have carried out do not support this view; working-class people, particularly when male and middle-aged or older, hold views very much akin to those of Alf Garnett. The fact that he would have been against going into Europe seems a powerful reason for joining the Six!)

Becoming a member of a more or less integrated European society does not, of course, solve all our problems, and may in the short run even increase our difficulties. Nevertheless, it does give us an opportunity of finding a new place in the world rather than sitting and lamenting the evil fates that have lost us our old place. We may have to give up cherished traditions of multiple wildcat strikes, unnecessary overtime working, and managerial inefficiency; this means that it will not be easy to sell the deal to a very conservative public. Among progressives, doubts will be expressed about the "inward looking" character of the Six, but this does not seem to me a good argument. Are Willy Brandt and his government more "inward looking" than Mr Heath and his? I very much doubt it. In any case, we can do nothing about it while we are outside; given the will, we might do a lot once we are inside.

Political integration and the possible creation of a supra-national entity are also worries frequently expressed. One has sympathy with those who express these doubts, but surely the era of the national state having absolute sovereignty is over. We learned just how independent we are at the time of Suez; this is a lesson that should not be forgotten. As part of a larger whole we may be able to mould political agencies nearer to our heart's desire and play an important part in running them. In isolation we will more and more be at the mercy of the great super-powers, of whom Europe will surely be one in due course.

²⁹ H. J. EYSENCK, psychologist, Professor of Psychology, Institute of Psychiatry, University of London, and Director, Psychological Department, Maudsley Hospital; author of *Uses and Abuses of Psychology* (1953), *Behaviour Therapy and the Neuroses* (1960), *The Biological Basis of Personality* (1969).

³⁰ BERNARD LEVIN, journalist, author of *The Pendulum Years: Britain and the 1960s* (1970), columnist on *The Times*.

THERE IS, OF COURSE, no guarantee of success. Conditions may prove unacceptable; the Six may never reach a supra-national unity; financial storms may blow the whole edifice down. That is why I think that the decisions must be an act of faith, a faith in the common-sense, the intelligence, and the integrity of the people and governments on the European continent. If we have doubts about them, be sure that they have doubts about us. Perfidious Albion may not recognise itself under that title, but few Europeans have forgotten the many wars in which the English conception of the balance of power has involved them. We are all brothers under the skin (except those of us who are sisters), and none of us has the right to throw the first stone. If the era of rampant nationalism is to come to an end, there must be acts of faith of this kind, and as one who has held the ideal of internationalism leading to world government ever since childhood, I cannot but feel that even a small step towards that ideal is well worth taking. To hard-headed Businessmen and Trade Unionists looking only for immediate monetary advantages, all this may sound the kind of absurd idealism they are used to hearing from liberal academics in their ivory towers. The question readers might like to ponder, however, is whether these hard-headed Businessmen and Trade Unionists who have been running our affairs in the past, have really done so well by this country, and by the world in general. Idealism may lead us astray, but on the other hand it may be our last hope.

My vote would be for European solidarity, as a token of the first step towards world solidarity.

WHEN, in March 1963, I contributed to the original ENCOUNTER symposium on this subject, I said in effect three things. First, that the economic disadvantages, to Britain, of staying out seemed to me greater than the economic advantages of going in, and that on economic grounds I was therefore in favour of going in. Second, that the political advantages of Britain's going in, to the existing members of the Common Market as well as to Britain and indeed to Western Europe as a whole, seemed to me greater than the political disadvantages to any of us in Britain's staying out, and that on political grounds I was therefore in favour of going in. And third, that although there were people whom I admire, and whose judgment I respect, on both sides of the argument, all the people in British public life for whom, and for whose opinions, I have least respect, seem to be for staying out, and that on symbolic grounds I was therefore in favour of going in.

I might phrase it differently today. Indeed, I have just done so. But my views have not changed. I still think Britain should join, and I still hope Britain will.

Bernard Levin³⁰

Graham Petrie

Understanding the Dobi

I MET ETHREDGE, the famous anthropologist, only once, shortly before his death. A friend had been asked to contribute an essay to a volume, *Ten Minds that Shook the World*, and invited me to be present at the interview that was to form the basis of his account of Ethredge. I agreed, simply out of a natural desire to meet someone so renowned, for I confess that I found the man's theories unacceptable (as the two opening sentences alone of my account must indicate) and formed one of a dwindling minority that rejected them outright and refused to readjust its life to suit their implications. I bore no personal hostility to the man himself, but found the shrill and vociferous claims of his adherents, their arrogance, their certainty that they alone possessed the ultimate secrets of the human personality, increasingly distasteful.

I shall make little attempt to convey the forced and artificial vocabulary and sentence structure through which Ethredge and my friend (whom I shall call Sloan) attempted to converse. It is difficult enough to understand, much less transcribe, and I could not help suspecting that the two speakers themselves, in twisting and distorting the instinctive pattern of their thoughts to conform to arbitrary and predetermined formulae, succeeded more than once in making communication impossible between them. At least this is how I interpreted the frequent hesitations and pauses, the gestures and repetitions, and the subdued smiles exchanged during long periods of silence. I may be accused of misrepresentation, but would the reader really be happier with the kind of gibberish that is daily

seeping more and more into conversation, reporting and interviews, having long ago rendered literary and intellectual work of all kinds totally unintelligible?

SLOAN AND I MET AS USUAL in a bar near my apartment. It had been raining all day and gusts of wind still stirred the puddles on the roadway. A grey monotonous light had penetrated the city all day, irritating my eyes and making it difficult for me to distinguish appearances with my usual clarity. I almost failed to recognise Sloan at first as he stood in the doorway looking for me, and when he joined me we sat for some time without speaking. At last I asked him what I should expect from Ethredge (neither of us aware at the time of the lingering and painful disease that was to bring him to his grave, at the age of 53, within a month). His only answer was to push towards me the book he had been carrying, which turned out to be Ethredge's autobiography, written shortly after his first and most famous expedition to New Guinea. I flicked through it and read a few sentences at random. One caught my eye and I read the whole paragraph:

The poison had done its work well: my leg stiffened rapidly and grew numb. I lay in the ditch for some hours, hardly daring to move, tormented by the ants and other insects that seemed to bite their routes and passageways over and through my body. I wanted to scream, but my swollen tongue filled my mouth and prevented it from opening. And I knew that any sound would bring my persecutors back to me once more. I dozed off at last, in a fever of delirium. When I woke the moon was high overhead and a cool breeze rustled the leaves of the trees that overhung the ditch. The insects had gone and my body was totally unmarked and

unscratched. What may be found most difficult to believe was that my leg had healed completely, or rather it was as though it had never been injured: the arrowhead imbedded in it had disappeared and there was no sign whatever of a wound.

I shrugged my shoulders and handed the book back to Sloan.

"It does not impress you?" he asked, speaking for my benefit with the awkwardness of one relearning a forgotten language. "It is not believable?" I replied that I was not very interested in the truth or otherwise of the account itself, but was surprised to find it expressed in such concrete language. "Ah! It was written early. Before," he explained.

I suggested that we make our way to Ethredge's house as we were already half-an-hour behind the time we had arranged to meet him, but Sloan waved away my objections and ordered more drinks. He seemed to have no desire to move but was also disinclined to talk, and we sat for some time staring in silence at the table between us or glancing at the sickly colours of the television in the corner of the room. Green faces leered at each other out of smudges of purple and blue that could represent either furniture or forests. It was growing darker outside, the rain had started again with a steady drumming on the pavement, and the streets were emptying after the rush-hour traffic. I suggested again that we leave, but Sloan shook his head; then he leaned over the table towards me and said with great intensity, "It must be prepared in advance. It must be as though you," he hesitated and sought for the right word, "*were* him. You must be asked his questions."

It took some time for me to understand that he wanted a rehearsal of the interview, with me playing the part of Ethredge. I told him this was ridiculous and unnecessary, that the man himself had been expecting us for an hour, that I knew little about him and could not possibly answer the questions in the way he would. Sloan treated all these objections as irrelevant and simply refused to move from where he was until I cooperated. I succeeded only in forcing him to promise to question me in a phraseology I could understand and he agreed to do his best.

HE ASKED ME what my feelings were on first setting foot in New Guinea. Fear, I told him, anticipation, eagerness, joy. He shook his head as though this were all wrong, but did not contradict me. How long did I live with the Dobis? I knew the answer to this from my reading: "Fifteen months, the first two of them spent recovering from the wounds I had received on my way to the interior." To my surprise he shook his head again, glanced at the book on the table before him and tapped his fingers thoughtfully on the cover. There was silence for several moments. And what condition were these people in when I found them? I replied that they were in a pretty bad way—in fact the tribe became extinct within a year of my visit, wiped out by the disease that had ravaged them for decades. They had lived in complete isolation from the outside world for centuries; I was not simply the first white man to see them but possibly the first and only stranger ever to make contact with them. They accepted me without hostility? "Yes, and without curiosity." What would I say were the most prominent characteristics of the tribe? "Gentleness and kindness, but also a pervasive lethargy closely allied to indifference. I could never be certain whether their immediate acceptance of me stemmed from fellow-feeling or merely from an incapacity to grasp the fact that I was inherently alien to them, different." And what were the main conclusions or results of my visit? "You can read all that in my books."

I persuaded him at last to abandon this fruitless investigation and to set out to visit Ethredge, who had now been waiting over two hours for us. Sloan had taken several drinks by this time; he had never been one to hold his liquor well and already his speech was slurred and he moved unsteadily on his feet. I tried to sober him up, but he brushed me away impatiently, insisting that he was perfectly all right. The rain had slackened to a steady drizzle as we went outside; Sloan had forgotten his hat but he refused to go back for it and made his way along the street muttering to himself, brushing without apology against other pedestrians and angrily shaking off my attempts at guidance and assistance. Yet as soon as we reached the street where Ethredge lived he seemed

to come to himself; he straightened up, adjusted his tie, groped around vaguely for his hat and made his way with assurance up the stairs to the second floor apartment.

ETHREDGE LOOKED MUCH older than his fifty-odd years. His hair was grey and his face lined with wrinkles; for most of the interview he sat huddled in a large armchair as though trying to lose himself in its depths, and stared fixedly at some maps of the Pacific Islands hanging on the wall near him. He spoke in a very gentle voice, at times so low that it was difficult to hear him against the renewed beating of the rain, and more than once he allowed his words to trail off into silence in the middle of a sentence and remained as though in a trance for several minutes. He accepted without comment that I should have accompanied Sloan, but throughout he paid little attention to me, as though he were aware of my presence and yet, in some essential way, I remained irrelevant. I transcribe the essence of the conversation as well as I can now remember it and with the assistance of some few notes scrawled at the time (bearing in mind the fact that I was performing what was virtually a task of translation as well).

Sloan appeared ill at ease at first, though he seemed to have recovered from his intoxication. He began with some purely factual questions which anyone who had read Ethredge's books would already have known the answers to; Ethredge answered these mechanically, hardly even looking at his interlocutor. Sloan sensed his subject's lack of interest and somewhat desperately plunged straight into a discussion of technicalities. Ethredge brightened up as he began to explain (though no doubt for the thousandth time) the language structure of the Dobi tribe. He said that it was easy enough to summarise the basic differences from any other known language (though there were analogues in Eskimo and some North American Indian tribes), but much more difficult to explain to a layman the revolutionary implications they contained.

Briefly, the Dobi language is totally metaphorical and abstract; there is nothing whatever about it that is concrete or literal. They

have no nouns to describe objects, for objects to them do not exist; instead they have an extremely subtle and apparently inexhaustible series of words, compounds, analogies and periphrases to express states of mind, feeling, thought and emotion—the range available to them here far exceeds that of any Western or “civilised” language. Similarly, they have no verbs that express action, movement or creation; in place of this they make use of ramifications of a word that can be translated only approximately as “being in a state of being.” They are able, however, to create hundreds or even thousands of variations on this word to express distinctions of the concept of “being” far beyond those available, in expression or even idea, to the Western mind.

To take just one example: the Dobi people perform speculations on the nature of time and infinity, on the millionfold attributes of God, and the minutest discriminations of thought and perception far beyond the conceptual range of any Western philosopher; they cannot, however, say: “I see a tree.” For them the tree does not exist, strictly speaking, for it does not form part of the interior realm which for them constitutes true being. If they are forced to acknowledge its existence by cutting it down, for example, for firewood, or by indicating to a friend that a leopard squatting in its branches is about to leap on him and devour him, they resort to gestures and inarticulate grunts that generally perform the requisite function. If necessary they will produce a cry of warning that might translate crudely and essentially inaccurately as: “That which is coming into being in a fraction of a second above where that which is moving towards it will be at that time will cause that which is not to be.” (All this, of course, would be expressed in one word, sounding something like “*fa-dei*”). And at times they are forced to acknowledge the physical nature of their world by carrying around with them (in a bag slung over their shoulders or in a cart dragged behind them) a collection of objects that it has become necessary to identify to others but for which they have no words. You will often encounter an aged Dobi almost literally unable to move under the weight of

a mass of objects of this kind gathered during his life-time.

That is not, however, the sole peculiarity of the Dobi language. If I follow Ethredge's explanation correctly (and, having refrained from reading most of his books, I am forced here to transcribe my understanding of his talk with Sloan), it is also a speech without personal pronouns and with no active voice. Everything, that is, is construed as passive, as happening to or being inflicted on collective or neutral entities that have no means of distinguishing individuals (and no desire to do so). This is why, in the example of the leopard¹ about to descend upon the man from its branch, it is not only impossible for the watcher to cry: "That leopard in the tree is going to jump on you!" or even: "You are about to be leapt on by that leopard above you!" (which latter would be possible if it were simply the prohibition of the active voice that was in question). The combined effect of all three linguistic peculiarities is such that the watcher has no means of separating himself from his friend, the leopard, or even the tree—all form part of a continuous flux that is constantly in motion. The leopard might well accomplish its intention and consume the man and the latter would cease from our point of view to exist, but his disappearance would make no more difference to the tribe as a whole than the death of one cell within the body makes to its neighbour or the annihilation of one leaf or grain of sand to the entity of which it forms a part.

In fact, Ethredge commented, it may very well be that though, from our standpoint, the tribe itself has now ceased to exist (or so we must assume, all attempts made by land and air to locate it having failed), the Dobi themselves may simply consider that they have moved into a different phase of the continuum of being, one that no longer requires the simulacrum of a physical or material substance. However this may be, the tribe was uniquely one devoid of any sense of personal identity whatever and one which, while making a necessary compromise with the exigencies of materialism, in

essence dispensed with this and lived in a world of pure thought.

THE EFFECT OF ETHREDGE'S discovery on Western thought had been profound. It had come at a time when the work of Whorf, Sapir, and Jakobson had been prompting a reconsideration of apparently "instinctive" patterns of thought and behaviour and asking whether these might not be more closely shaped and conditioned by linguistic habits than had previously been suspected. Ethredge's account of the Dobi seemed conclusive proof of this theory: here was a people whose language made it impossible for them to recognise or acknowledge basic attributes of the world that seemed indispensable to us; the result was to throw into question assumptions about personality and the nature of reality that had prevailed almost unchallenged for centuries. His theories established themselves with unexpected ease and rapidity, but, perhaps inevitably, they had taken root only in a very superficial way.

All over the world there had been a vogue in which men attempted to adapt their own languages to suit the structure of Dobi and so bring into existence the world-view implied therein, a vogue created by a perhaps understandable revulsion at the patent absurdities universally accepted in the name of material reality. This was the trend I had attempted, with some success, to resist: I rejected the nonsense that resulted when men attempted to abandon their own mental conditioning and communicate through passive and impersonal circumlocutions. For one thing, they had not the centuries of training in this available to the Dobi, and for another, they were rarely as successful in their attempts as they persuaded themselves they were. One could listen to hundreds of conversations that differed little in their assumptions and speech patterns from those of the past, but where the participants were utterly convinced they had developed a new and unique language and were expressing ideas previously inaccessible to the Western mind. Certainly this led to what appeared to be a deeper sense of harmony and mutual understanding, but to me it remained based on a fundamental

¹ It is strange to find the author reverting so constantly to the subject of leopards, for these animals are not found in New Guinea.—Ed.

self-deception. I held Ethredge responsible for this collective mania; and though he and Sloan were more skilled performers of the farce than most, I found that I could listen to them without impatience for little more than a few minutes at a time.

THEY HAD MOVED NOW into a detailed discussion of sound-shifts in Dobi and to alleviate my boredom I picked up the copy of Ethredge's autobiography that Sloan had brought with him. I soon found myself enthralled by it; however tedious and inconsequential the man's conversation might be now, there had clearly been a time when he could express himself with some degree of vividness and power. Here is his description of the Dobi ritual of "Living the Leopard":

My translation of the title [he explains to begin with] is suited to Western habits of mind, not to those of the Dobi. The rite is strictly incomprehensible from our perspective and the Dobi word that described it (*lo-tala*) expresses complex mutations of the state of being that English cannot even begin to convey.

The ritual takes place at night in a circle formed at the centre of the village by the systematic and yet desultory destruction of the headman's house (I translate thus the Dobi *gan-sara*). The circle is lit by flares carried by children under the age of six; they move in a continuous and revolving procession throughout the night keeping up an unvarying chant of the most sacred word in the Dobi language. The chief actor is chosen by lot at the beginning of the ritual, but he has also been designated for this role from birth; he arrives at the ceremony already clad in the holy garments. I make no attempt to reconcile this contradiction and can only say that I participated in this ritual on three occasions; each time the lottery was cast with scrupulous fairness and each time it fell to the one appointed.

The acolyte takes his place at the centre of the circle. No one pays much attention to him after the choice has been made, and the villagers continue with their normal evening routine: they converse, eat, drink, make love, and sleep. He stands immobile for some time, often a period of hours, until the first rays of the rising moon slant against his body. Then, at the point where the moonbeam touched him, his flesh begins to dissolve: it neither melts nor drips like wax to his feet, it simply vanishes. The process continues as the moonlight spreads over him, his body assimilates itself quietly to the air and he makes no sound of pain or protest. Everything seems fused into a harmony in which his motionless figure, the scream of a dying animal, the whirr of the night insects, the hum of conversation, all take their inevitable place. Quietly he blends into the air around him: his body slowly disappears until only the upper torso, a hand or perhaps a shoulder remains. Finally the moon is at its zenith and there is no trace left of the initiate.

Then, as the moon begins its descent, you can make out the faint appearance of something dark on the grass where the boy had stood. It is the claw, then the paw, then the leg of a leopard. As the moon fades and dawn begins to spread through the forest the animal becomes more whole and distinct; finally, with the first ray of sunlight, he is complete. He licks his paws abstractedly, rises from his recumbent position, stretches, and stalks away through the ring of children into the jungle. No one seems to notice that he is there.

I WANTED TO ASK Ethredge more about this ceremony and during one of the silences between him and Sloan I broke in with a question. The great man ignored me, however, and merely stared dreamily at his maps. Sloan began to speak again, but I had become roused and I interrupted rather aggressively to raise some of the problems about Ethredge's theories that had worried me for years and about which I wished to form some clearer understanding.

"If the Dobi language is so utterly alien to Western modes of thought," I almost shouted at him, "how did you ever come to learn it?"

He looked at me with a weariness that indicated he had been asked this many times before. He explained that he had begun by using the traditional methods of pointing at a hand, a tree, the sky, a leopard, speaking the English word and asking for the local equivalent. The Dobi, naturally enough, had merely looked at him in bewilderment or had gestured likewise at the tree, nodding their heads in amicable agreement. It had taken him weeks to grasp the basic conceptual difference as regards the nature of objects; once he had seized on this, however, he was able to make use of his professional training to adapt as far as possible to their state of mind. There was no mystery about it and thousands had performed similar exploits.

"That would be feasible," I said, "with a language whose structure paralleled in some way an Indo-European language such as English, or even any language previously known to us. But, as you describe it, Dobi is so completely different that it must be impossible for you ever to be certain that the inferences you drew from your researches were correct. You had no way of checking them or confirming them outside the assumptions you yourself made, for the

Dobi were never interested in thinking along the lines that you were. Maybe you were wrong all along. Maybe Dobi is not really as alien to us as you thought it was; perhaps you just failed to find the key that would have opened up a world picture basically similar to our own. And maybe it really is alien, but in a totally different and unimaginable way, not in the one you supposed."

He looked at Sloan for a moment and then back at me, and smiled sadly. "Do you really think," he asked, "that I have not suspected that?" He said that this doubt had been with him for years; he had always wondered about it and had tried to return to the Dobi to confirm or deny it, but they had disappeared. He was certain that they *had* existed, but in recent years he had come to the belief that he had misinterpreted their language. Perhaps he had transferred to them his doubts as to the reality of his own existence; perhaps he had lived a composite or individual dream for fifteen months and on awakening had re-imagined it thus. (He hinted discreetly at his bout of

fever). Whatever the explanation, he had no right to make his hesitations public, for his doubts were themselves problematical and revelation of them might do more harm than good. Perhaps, he said finally, my mistake, if it is one, will prove to be a blessing, and men will deceive themselves into a state of harmony denied them by the truth.

THIS STORY has no conclusion. Ethredge took to his bed the following day and was dead within a month, the victim, some said, of the disease that had exterminated the Dobi and that he had carried within him ever since his visit to them. The last few words of his explanation (if that is what it was) had been almost lost in the howling of the rising wind and the gusts of rain against the window. It was clear, however, that it was time for us to leave. Sloan closed the book he had been reading and accompanied me to the door. We made our way downstairs into the darkness and parted without a word.

Job

(1)

DURING THE FIRST stage of suffering, Job's companion was a worm that had lodged itself in one of his open sores. Job would pass the time brooding; the worm, exploring. Job would screw up his eyes and try to see through the dark cloud-bank overhead. Or he would stare at the supple, slowly digesting worm as if it were a messenger from another world.

Eventually, they came to know each other quite well.

(2)

OF COURSE THE friends were blond and clean-shaven and had no trouble making their lines scan.

They reasoned thus: that although filth and putridity were no proof of viciousness, they did indicate wrong living, or mismanagement. Item: Job's nose was unbeautifully hooked. Item: Job's face was crossed with whole networks of unhappiness. His potential vindication, they said, was already creating havoc in the realm of Nature. Birds fell, confused, from the sky; lions lost their appetite; a large date-palm had been seen pacing in the wilderness.

"In any case," they said on the way home, "his character has not changed. A miracle is no cure for bad breath."

Stephen Mitchell

Ivan Goncharov

A Literary Quarrel

Turgenev as "Plagiarist"

IN 1847 I WAS TOLD that Turgenev was in town. I went to see Belinsky one evening and found Turgenev there. He had even then, as I recall, published something in *Notes of the Fatherland*. He was spoken of in Belinsky's circle as a gifted *littérateur* who held much hope for the future. He was standing with his back to the door as I entered, and he was surveying engravings and portraits on the wall through a lorgnette. Belinsky introduced us to each other, and Turgenev turned round, gave me his hand, and then again began to survey the pictures attentively. Later he again turned round, said several favourable things to me about my novel, and then once again gave his attention to the pictures. I saw that he was posing, acting in an

abrupt manner and putting himself out to be a dandy like an Onegin or a Pechorin, faithfully imitating both their air and their behaviour.

I don't recall what happened in 1846 and 1847—was it then, or much later, in 1848, that Botkin and Annenkov came on the scene, and was Turgenev there then, or had he gone away? I remember only that Belinsky died in 1848, and his whole circle, in addition to his loss, suffered from the censorship's increasing strictness arising from the revolution and change of government in France.

But all this is only background. The hero of my tale will be one personality, Turgenev, as shown in his relations with me and the consequences of these relations. From this

DID Turgenev steal ideas, themes, and plots from Goncharov? And did Goncharov—the creator of perhaps the chief archetype of the Russian character in his novel "*Oblomov*" (1859)—suffer his mental collapse as a consequence?

These are the two dramatic questions raised by this previously unpublished document (translated by Andrew Field) of an extraordinary literary quarrel. Goncharov's book-length manuscript—which the historian Prince Mirsky referred to as a "psychopathic document"—was published only in a Petrograd archive in 1924. It was written, as Mr Field also notes, by "a demonstrably ill person . . ." But, he adds, although "Goncharov was in a paranoiac state . . . there is at least very strong circumstantial evidence that Turgenev did plagiarise from him, and—a chicken-and-egg problem—Goncharov's mental collapse may have resulted from Turgenev's action . . ."

We know that Turgenev borrowed freely;

there is the well-established "parallelism" between Turgenev's "*A Month in the Country*" and Balzac's play "*La Marâtre*," as well as the striking "echoes" from Gogol's "*Dead Souls*" in many of Turgenev's plots. (But, then, George Sand freely made acknowledgment to Turgenev for the plot of one of her important novels.) As for Goncharov, although he did attend Turgenev's funeral in 1883 (but made a point of declining to attend the official memorial), he continued to fulminate against Turgenev and his "glitter" to the very end (he died in 1891). Among his other charges—an endless field here for the literary detective—was that Turgenev had even passed on his plots to his cosmopolitan friends (who, after all, included Flaubert and Henry James).

This, and other relevant material, is published by Andrew Field in his fascinating documentary work, "*The Completion of Russian Literature*" (Allen Lane The Penguin Press).

perhaps disjointed but true tale the thing that forced me, almost against my will, to write these pages will be made clear.

TURGENEV would sometimes come to St. Petersburg, and sometimes he would be absent for whole winters. During the lifetime of his mother, who, as he put it, "set limits" on his means, he lived frugally, but when she died he began to live on a broader scale. He employed a chef and was fond of inviting people to dine. In general, he strove to become the centre, both as host and as literary talent, of Belinsky's former circle.

Turgenev was a great favourite, not only for his wit, talent, and culture, but also for his endearing, not so much good-hearted as caressing and fawning conduct which he showed to all impartially. When he met you, he would treat you as his best friend: he would put his hands on your shoulders and invariably address you as "my dear chap," looking at you so warmly and speaking even more warmly, promising everything that you might want of him. But as soon as you went away, Turgenev would immediately forget you and act in exactly the same way with the next person he chanced upon. If he had agreed to go somewhere, he would not keep his promise, and sometimes it would happen that, having made a date to entertain you in his home, he had gone somewhere else. He did not often keep his promised engagements; he would make a promise, but if someone afterward invited him somewhere else and he preferred to go there, that's where he would go. Later he would grasp his head and look so shamefully and sincerely at the person before whom he was guilty! But he never would forget an appointment when it was necessary to him!

IN 1848 AND EVEN EARLIER, beginning in 1847, the plan for *Oblomov* took shape within me. I sketched out my intentions haphazardly on paper, sometimes noting down an entire sentence by a single word, or I would put down a compressed version of an event in the novel, a remark on the character of one of my heroes, etc. I amassed clusters of such papers and fragments, and all the while the novel was writing itself in my head. Occasionally I would sit down and write for

an entire week or two, two to three chapters, and then I would again put it aside. I had written only the first part of the novel in 1850. But in 1848 I had already published the fragment "Oblomov's Dream" in the almanac connected with *The Contemporary*, and by that time, true to my deplorable habit, I was telling everyone I met what I was intending to do, what I was writing, and I would read to whomever visited me what I had already written, filling the story out with what was to happen later.

This happened simply because the richness of my story could not be contained within me, and even more because I suffered an extreme lack of confidence in myself. "Could this be nonsense that I'm writing? Is it good enough? Is it not perhaps absurd?" were the sort of questions with which I continually tormented myself. In this way I had given my first novel, *A Common Story*, to Belinsky for his judgment, not knowing myself what to think about it. And I am that way to this moment. Whenever I take my pen in hand, I begin to be tormented with doubts.

My novels encompass large periods of Russian life. *Oblomov* and *The Precipice*, for example, contain thirty-year periods, and this is one reason, apart from lack of time and my job, as well as my indolent and worldly life, that I wrote these novels over such long spans of time.

Everything that I have just been saying is an integral part of what I am now about to describe.

I VERY FREQUENTLY and in great detail laid out both the general plan and particulars of *Oblomov* for Turgenev, since he was a refined critic who listened to my stories more willingly than anyone else. He himself was then writing his remarkable *Sportsman's Sketches*, one sketch after another, filling *The Contemporary* with them to the point where Belinsky was brought to say, "We've had enough! He should do something else!"—not to him personally, but to others, and I was among those who heard him say this. His sketches were read with interest and justly brought their author fame. No one had depicted serfdom with such artistic sensitivity, showing all its ugliness, and scarcely anywhere else can you find Russian country life and nature drawn with such a tender, velvet stroke! Turgenev will always remain

in literature as an extraordinary artist-miniaturist! "As a miniaturist!" people will say to this. "And what about his major works—for example, *A Nest of Gentlefolk*, *Fathers and Sons*, *On the Eve*, *Smoke*? Are these miniatures? Do they not add to his worth and assure him a high place in literature? Are these not large, full, and carefully conceived pictures of Russian life?" In reply I can only sigh deeply and pursue my narrative.

IN 1849 I TOOK A TRIP on the Volga to Simbirsk, where I grew up, and there, during the four summer months, was born and developed into a complex picture the plan for my new novel—that is, *The Precipice*. This novel was known in our circle by the name of its hero; that is, as *Raisky*. I continued to work out *Oblomov* in my head, and *The Precipice* as well, sketching out, as is my custom, sheaves of paper containing notes and sketches of personages, occurrences, pictures, scenes, etc.

When I took my round-the-world trip in an official capacity (which resulted in my travel book *The Frigate Pallada*), I had the materials for both novels with me and I did add to them, but there was no time to write. I was entirely immersed in this new world, this new way of life, with all the strong impressions that it produced on me. In the beginning of 1855, in February to be precise, I returned from my trip across Siberia to St. Petersburg.

In St. Petersburg I found that the entire literary circle had come together: Turgenev, Annenkov, Botkin, Nekrasov, Panaev, Grigorovich. I think that Count Leo Tolstoy had also made his appearance by then, having called attention to himself from the start with his war stories. If I am not mistaken, there was then in St. Petersburg also the other Count Tolstoy, Count Alexei Tolstoy, who subsequently wrote the famous play *The Death of Ivan the Terrible*.

There was much talk and quarrelling about literature, noisy dinners, gaiety—in a word, a good time. Then too, censorship had become lighter. In 1856 it was proposed that I accept a position as censor, and it was necessary for me to accept. I was in the process of publishing my travel notes at that time, and this distracted me from my primary literary labours—*Oblomov* and *Raisky*.

AS EARLY AS 1855 I had begun to notice Turgenev's growing interest toward me. He frequently sought conversations with me, and it appeared that he held my opinions in high esteem, and listened attentively to everything I said. There was, of course, nothing unpleasant for me in this, and I felt no reason to be less than open in all matters with him, particularly in regard to my literary plans. He would listen particularly studiously when I happened to read aloud something that I had just written.

Thus, for instance, during the time that I was sending chapters from my travel notes to various journals, my custom was to read aloud what I had just finished to several people. I did not wish to burden Turgenev with the reading of such light material, but he, as I recall, when he found out that I was going to read a certain chapter at Maikov's, made a special point of turning up there. In short, he followed me very closely, and this had the effect of bringing us nearer to each other, so that I began to confide all my thoughts in him. And then once, it was in 1855, he visited me at my apartment and made a point, without saying anything himself, of listening to all my sincere effusions, artfully questioning me about what I was intending to do and how I was going to do it. *Oblomov* already had its first part completed and several chapters more. He knew all about this in detail. As it happened, I told him not only the entire plot of my future novel (*The Precipice*), but also all of the details which had already been prepared in preliminary form: scenes, specifics, absolutely everything, everything.

He listened without stirring, virtually holding his breath, putting his ear almost to my lips as he sat next to me on my little divan in the corner of my study.

In place of the nihilist Volokhov, as he appears in the printed version of my novel, I then had in mind a character who had been sent to the provinces under police supervision for his untoward ideas and free-thinking. The radical type of Volokhov had not yet emerged because, in the 1840s, nihilism had still not made its full appearance. At that time, however, those who were suspected of free-thinking were often sent to the provinces.

Inasmuch as I stretched the matter out and took a long time to do my writing, my novel

changed its form in correspondence with the times and circumstances. I was on the Volga a second time in 1862, and then Volokhovs were present everywhere in the guise in which he is depicted in the novel. Then, according to my original plan, Vera, who becomes infatuated with Volokhov, went to Siberia with him, while Raisky abandoned his native land and went abroad, returning after several years to find a new generation and a panorama of happy life.

I planned to have a huge chapter devoted to the forebears of Raisky, containing stories about the gloomy and tragic episodes from this family's chronicle beginning with his great-grandfather, his grandfather, and, finally, Raisky's father. In this chapter there was to appear a whole gallery of social types and tendencies (Eastern-style despot, Freemason, hero of the Napoleonic Wars, Decembrist) right up to Raisky, the hero of *The Precipice*. I told Turgenev all this in the way that one relates one's dreams, with ardour, scarcely able to speak of it, now drawing pictures of the Volga, its precipices, the meetings of Vera on lunar nights at the foot of the precipice and in the garden, her meetings with Volokhov, with Raisky, etc., etc., and I myself took pleasure in it all and pride in the richness of the picture, hurrying to convey everything for evaluation by a refined critical mind.

TURGENEV listened as though transfixed, without stirring. I could see the enormous impression which my story had produced on him.

When I had finished, this is what I said: "Now if I should die, you can find much here that is useful for yourself! But as long as I am alive, I'll use it myself!" Turgenev carefully questioned me about whether or not I had told anyone else these things. I replied that I had told no one, although very shortly thereafter I related the same information to Dudyskin as well, and in the presence of Turgenev, and I also related part of it to Druzhinin. I think that was all. Even now I have kept a letter in which Turgenev writes that he "never will forget the scenes and happenings which were told to him and Dudyskin." In truth, as it turned out, he did not forget! When he had returned home, he must have written down everything that he had heard word for word.

DURING ALL OF THIS TIME, from 1855 to 1859, Turgenev continued to create miniatures. Everyone was expecting something major from him. But he had nothing large to give. Such was the nature of his talent! Once he himself sadly confessed this to me and Pisemsky: "I don't have what each of you has—the flesh and blood of types and characters!" Indeed, he had no mastery of the brush, with him it is all pencil, silhouette, sketches, all faithful and delightful. The closer he is to country life in central Russia, the more lively, clear and warm are his sketches. In such instances he is an extraordinary artist, because he is drawing from nature what is known to him and loved by him. In every other instance he is not creating but composing, and even, as it were, recomposing what he has overheard (which in fact turned out to be the case), and all the heroes and heroines in his so-called long tales, if they are not taken from country life like Fenichka in *Fathers and Sons*, are pale, as though incomplete, not filled out, not created by him, but merely reflected on his canvas from some mirror standing to one side.

I have said that he was my willing audience. He invited me to have conversations, engaged in correspondence with me, and I began to notice that some of my words seemed to be flashing in his novellas. Once I read in one of his novellas, I forget which, a little scene from *Oblomov*, the one in which Oblomov is sitting in the park waiting for Olga, and he looks around and sees how everything is living and breathing around him, in the trees and the grass, how a pair of butterflies rush past waltzing about each other, how the bees buzz. But I paid little attention to this. It merely seemed strange to me that he should have need of such trifles from others. I, like everyone else, considered him to be a stronger talent and a more fertile intellect than he in fact was!

Once during the autumn, I believe it was in the same year that I was preparing to publish *Oblomov*, Turgenev arrived either from the country or from abroad—I don't remember which—and brought with him a new novella, *A Nest of Gentlefolk*, which he was preparing to publish in *The Contemporary*. Everyone was waiting to hear this novella read, but he claimed to have bronchitis and said that he was unable to read it himself. P. B. Annenkov undertook to read it. A day was fixed. I heard

that Turgenev was inviting about eight or nine people to his apartment to dine and then afterward hear the novella. He didn't say a word to me about either dinner or the reading. I didn't go to the dinner, but after the dinner, since we all dropped in on one another without standing on ceremony, I did not consider it at all indecorous to arrive for the reading. I had scarcely come through the door when everyone was upon me, asking why I had not come to the dinner, since they all knew how close Turgenev and I had been. I replied that no matter how close people might be they still did not come to a dinner to which they had not been invited. "I wasn't invited, and so I didn't come." What a surprised expression Ivan Sergeivich put on! With what innocence he looked at me. "What do you mean? I invited you, I did invite you!" he muttered. "No, you didn't invite me!" I said decisively. He did not say anything further, and soon Annenkov began to read.

EVERYONE KNOWS *A Nest of Gentlefolk*. Now, of course, it has faded with time, but then it produced a strong effect. And what did I hear? What I had been narrating to Turgenev in the course of three years—more precisely, a compressed but rather full sketch of *The Precipice*. As the basis for his novella he had taken the chapter about Raisky's forebears, and he had selected and displayed my best spots on this canvas, but compressed and shortened; all of the sap of the novel had been drained away, distilled, and converted into an artificial, purified form. I had a grandmother, he had an aunt, but there were the two sisters, the nieces, Lavretsky, who was so similar in character to my Raisky and who also conversed at night with his friend from youth as Raisky does with Kozlov, the meetings in the garden, and all the rest. He didn't even forget the figure of the German who was a true artist. In *The Precipice* the grandmother has an old book, and he too brings an old book into his story.

The reading finished. I understood now why Turgenev had not invited me to dine: he was hoping that I would not come to the evening reading as well. I understood how wretched he must have felt during the reading as he watched me!

Everyone began to make judgments about the novel and discuss it, naturally praising it. The entire circle was there, even, I believe, Count Leo Tolstoy. I let everyone depart and remained with Turgenev. I really should have gone too, without saying a word, and simply have abandoned my planned novel. But this novel was my life: I had put a part of myself into it, people who were near to me, the country where I was born, the Volga—everything, one could even say, which was my own and dear to me in life.

I remained, and I told Turgenev bluntly that the novella that I had heard was nothing but a copy of my intended novel. How white he grew for an instant, like a clown in the circus, how he dashed about, how he jabbered, "Why, why, what are you saying? It's not true, no! I'll throw my novel into the stove!"

Every word that he spoke, every movement that he made confessed that which a lie could not cover.

"No, don't throw it away," I said to him. "I have given you this, and I can still write something else. I have a great deal!" It ended with that. I departed. Later I saw Dudyskin, who also had been at the reading. He burst out laughing when I began to speak of it, and said, "Yes, he picked your story over pretty artfully!" He already knew in detail the whole plot of my novel.

THE RELATIONS BETWEEN Turgenev and me became strained. We did continue to see each other, however, and we had more than a few conversations on this theme: I would point out to him all the things he had borrowed from me, he would defend himself. Finally he proposed to give me a letter in which he would detail everything that he had heard from me—that is, repeat in concentrated form the novel of mine that I had related to him. I turned back his proposition with indifference, but he insistently desired to give me this letter. He came to see me and sat down to write, and then he read it to me. It began: "On the surface I myself actually do see a similarity which appeared, probably, under the influence of the novel which I heard from you, but beyond that I am more inclined to see the difference between our two works." (This letter has been mislaid somewhere by me—but as I saw

afterward, it was really necessary not to me but to Turgenev himself. The lines which I have just cited express completely the thought of what he wrote, although they may not agree literally with the original letter which cannot be found.) The differences he saw were insignificant ones, such as that my novel is set on the Volga, while his is set in a different place. When I asked him why he did not mention Vera's fall in his letter, or the scenes between her and the old woman, he became confused—he evidently did not wish to make mention of this, for reasons of his own. But there was nothing to be done then, and he mentioned it. About the teacher Kozlov, and how he studied, and his marriage to a steward's daughter, and what sort of person his wife, Ulinka, was and her relations with her husband—about this there was not a word. He gave me his letter, I threw it into a drawer, and that is where the matter ended.

TURGENEV AND I CONTINUED to see each other, but more or less coldly. Still, we did visit each other's home, and on one visit he said to me that he was intending to write a novella, and he told me its content. This was a continuation of the very same theme from *The Precipice*: the further fate and drama of Vera. I told him, of course, that I understood what he was attempting to do: to draw out little by little the full content of *Raisky*, breaking it up into episodes, just as he had done with *A Nest of Gentlefolk*—that is, to change the setting, to transfer the action to another place, to show the characters somewhat differently by mixing them up, but to leave the very same subjects, the very same characters, the very same psychological motifs, and to follow step by step in my path! And there would be this further benefit for him: while I was still attempting to finish my novel, he would have beaten me to it, and so it would appear that not he, but I, so to speak, was following in his traces and imitating him!

What Turgenev wanted did happen and is happening even now! His intrigue, like a huge net, has been thrown far in both distance and time. Turgenev has shown genius for intrigue, which, if it had been used in another way, with high patriotic aims, would of course have resulted in another Richelieu or Metternich.

OUR CIRCLE ALREADY KNEW about our first falling out, but they merely talked about it for a while and then were silent. I too of course decided to be silent, because it was quite foolish to protest against a finished and printed novella on the basis of a novel *en herbe* known only to a limited circle!

Turgenev's new undertaking pushed me beyond the limits of my endurance, and I talked about this matter first of all with Dudyshkin. Dudyshkin thought it was both amusing and piquant to watch the way in which Turgenev would momentarily grow pale and confused when I purposely hinted in his presence and the presence of others first about *A Nest of Gentlefolk* and then about his new novella and exchanged glances with Dudyshkin.

Perhaps it would merely have continued in this manner indefinitely, but Dudyshkin himself brought the matter to a head by his tactlessness. He liked to spur people on when some sort of dispute was in the air, and he loved to burst out laughing when both sides began to grow heated and histrionic. This was a source of amusement to him, and he was eager, whenever possible, to set people against one another. Naturally this was not a virtue, but he did this in minor things and primarily for the sake of a joke. In this case the joke was a bad one and very nearly ended in a duel.

This new novella of Turgenev's, continuing the theme from *Raisky* that I had related to him, had come out under the title *On the Eve*, but I had not read it and knew it only through Turgenev's own account of it to me. Dudyshkin and I continued to enjoy our little joke about the whole thing, and Turgenev continued to grow confused at our hints. One day I met Dudyshkin on Nevsky Prospect and asked him where he was going. "To the velvet knave [that is what we called him between ourselves] to have dinner." "You'll be dining at my expense," I remarked in jest, having in mind the royalties that Turgenev received for *On the Eve*. "And may I convey that message to him?" Dudyshkin asked me laughingly. "By all means, by all means!" I said, also in jest, and we went our ways.

WHOEVER WOULD HAVE THOUGHT that Dudyshkin would actually say it! And he said it,

moreover, in the presence of five or six other dinner guests! He thought, of course, that Turgenev would again flush, and he would enjoy his confusion. But Turgenev's back was forced to the wall by this remark: he had a choice now either of confessing, which naturally he would never do, or of defending himself. The next day Turgenev and Annenkov came to see me, did not find me at home, and left a note with the question "What was the significance of your words conveyed through Dudyshkin?" I went to see Dudyshkin and showed him the note, asking in turn what this note meant.

"But didn't you instruct me to tell him what you said yesterday?" he timidly asked. I replied, "It couldn't be that you seriously thought so. If I had asked you to strike him, would you also have done that?"

Dudyshkin saw what an unforgivably stupid thing he had done. He was a good and honourable man, very intelligent, perhaps a little too wrapped up in himself, cautious, evasive, but that is all, and then suddenly he made a serious mistake because of his passion for provoking people. He was susceptible to jaundice, and from that day onward, he grew noticeably yellower and thinner.

I told him only that if the matter should lead to a serious conclusion, that is, to a duel, then I felt entirely justified in counting on him to be my second. He agreed, but he had me write a note allowing him to meet with Turgenev and answer both for himself and for me without any detriment to me. I stated only that I would not take back what I had said.

I DON'T KNOW, or I've forgotten now, what he said. I recall only that it was decided on both sides to have a definitive explanation about this matter in the presence of several witnesses. Besides Annenkov and Dudyshkin, Druzhinin and A. V. Nikitenko were invited, and the explanation took place in my home. But of course there was nothing that could come of this. I had for the most part related the novel to him when we were alone together, and only later in part in the presence of Dudyshkin and Druzhinin. These two were little concerned with the details, and knew only the over-all plan of the novel, as a result of which they could neither affirm

nor deny the accusation. Nikitenko was invited as an esteemed witness, well known for his gentle character. Annenkov belonged to Turgenev's coterie and, *quand même*, took his part beforehand, because his own interest as a confidant of Turgenev's was touched by my accusation against his leader. As for Dudyshkin, the cause of all this uproar, he was more upset than either Turgenev or myself.

At the start Turgenev was very pale, while I was red. He was afraid that I would undertake a vigorous defence with proofs in hand and demonstrate everything in a persuasive manner, showing every passage, how it was taken, how it was changed, where the similarity was to be found, etc. But I was no less disturbed than he and was not happy that everything had come to the surface. He, naturally, demanded juridical proofs, and there were none except for my timeworn intended plot, a matter to which only I could speak with authority.

When we sat down, the first evidence heard was the story of our first disagreement, with the reading of the letter that he had thrust upon me in which he made mention of a few things from my forthcoming novel, while maintaining silence about those things which he wished to use himself. Turgenev gave a good demonstration of the kind of acting which constituted the basis of his character and his entire life. "As if I could betray the confidence of a comrade!" said Turgenev, as I, exhausted by this difficult scene, weakly narrated in a few words the points of similarity that I found between his work and mine. Against my will falling into an account of all the petty details—which were well known both to me and Turgenev but could not be anything but exhausting for bystanders to hear—I saw that this was merely boring to the rest, being themselves uninvolved, and that I could not interest them in a detailed examination.

DRUZHININ AND NIKITENKO began to try to pacify us with innocuous assertions: "You're both honourable and gifted people, and it could be that there was a coincidence in your themes quite by chance. And anyway one of you depicts one thing in one way, while the other does it in a different manner," and more in that vein.

TURGENEV LAID SPECIAL EMPHASIS upon my pointing out any similarity with his novella *On the Eve*, and finally he said that very likely I had not read it. This was true, but I remembered his account of his plot to me. "But you must read it, certainly you must read it!" he demanded. I promised to read it. In regard to this novel he had employed a ludicrously coarse device. The heroine of his novel is called Elena, and originally in my plan I called my heroine Elena instead of Vera, as she was called in the final version. "Surely if I had wanted to steal anything from you, I would have at least changed the name!" he said.

Turgenev grew bolder, and Annenkov also began to show signs of satisfaction on seeing that his patron was evidently to emerge dry from the water. I remained silent in the face of this effrontery, seeing that I had lost all possibility of uncovering the truth, and I again regretted that I had not simply abandoned my novel from the beginning.

We all got up. "Goodbye," I said. "I thank you for attending, gentlemen."

Turgenev was the first to take his hat. No longer pale and confused, he had now regained full colour, being satisfied that I could not juridically prove him a *plagiaire*, as he expressed it, being unwilling to translate the word



Seated: I. A. GONCHAROV, I. S. TURGENEV, A. V. DRUZHININ, A. N. OSTROVSKY.

Standing: Count L. N. TOLSTOY, D. N. GRIGOROVICH.

into Russian—*et pour cause*. "Farewell, Ivan Alexandrovich," he proclaimed dramatically. "We are seeing each other for the last time!" And he left in triumph. At this even Dudyskin raised his head a bit, seeing that the matter had not come to nothing after all.

WE REMAINED APART for several years, not meeting anywhere and not even bowing to each other in passing. I began to spend even more time than was my custom in solitude. But I continued to work on my novel. In 1860 and 1861 I published excerpts from it in *The Contemporary* and *Notes of the Fatherland*, and I continued, in my naïveté, to read and relate (not to Turgenev of course, for I was not seeing him, but to Druzhinin, Botkin, and others) what I was in the process of writing. Turgenev knew and kept himself informed about everything.

After several years, while I was at Druzhinin's funeral in the church at Smolenskoe Cemetery, Annenkov suddenly approached me and said, "Turgenev wishes to offer you his hand. What is your response?"

"I will give him my hand," I replied, and so we again came together as though nothing had happened. Once again there were meetings, conversations, and dinners, and I forgot everything that had been. He and I never said a word about the novel. Turgenev made this peace, I saw afterward, not because moral convictions prompted him to restore a friendship, which he never had with anyone anyway. He wanted, first of all, to be assured that this quarrel, which had become well known after our explanation before witnesses, was

forgotten, and with it my accusation of theft, or *plagiat*, as he cautiously put it. Secondly, he needed to follow my activities more closely and hinder the completion of my novel from which he had borrowed his *Fathers and Sons* and *Smoke*. He saw in me his sole rival in our generation; Leo Tolstoy had at that time only begun to write his war stories, Grigorovich was writing about peasant life, and Pisemsky and Ostrovsky came much later. Thus I alone stood in his path, and he wholeheartedly set himself the task of ripping me down, preventing me from being translated abroad and, by means of his own critical opinion, even cutting short foreign attempts to find out about me. He was believed because they knew only him, and that is how he succeeded. He had set himself a plan in which he was to assume the role of a genius, the head of a new period in Russian literature, and to this day he has successfully played the part of a great writer.

And the same sort of theft was repeated by Turgenev a second time!

PERHAPS YOU WILL SAY that I am writing all this in a delirium, in a state of nervous irritation, and that I have merely made up a foolish tale. Ah, if only this were so! I would gladly call myself a madman! But I cannot, for the sake of truth I cannot!

Sometimes a lie may be beautiful and effective! And very often it will serve its clever master for a long time! But it supposedly will never serve him to the end, for it will always finally show its filthy face!

Isn't this true? If it is not, then one cannot live on this earth!

The Jazzmen

(for Tim Blanning)

"Jazzmen to their graves are gone
But the discs go spinning on."

* * *

Tim, remember Doug Dobell
And all those 10" platters? Well,
Here's to Pee wee, Pops and Lu,
Bunk, the Firehouse Five plus Two,
Kid—that blazing tailgate ranter—,
Vintage from the Duke's decanter,
Wild Bill sharing Eddie's gin,
The Red Light where they cleaned up sin,
Carnegie Hall in '38
When the bourgeois tapped their feet,
Paul Gonsalves' marathon
At Newport, not one bar too long.
Humph at the Conway, Ken at Mac's
(Dare one allow the alto sax?)
Slow Drag's bass and Muggsy's horn,
Sister Rosetta, gospel-born,
Buddy, Satchmo, Bix, the King,
Fletcher, Benny, all that Swing,
Jelly's tooth and Fats' left hand,
Even, perhaps, the Whiteman band.
Remember how we used to sit,
Ponder a disc and argue it,
Studying the personnel—
Basic, of course! You couldn't tell?
Why, any fool could recognise
That sparse clutch at the ivories,
A Caliban of octaves under
Ariel who rides the thunder;
No good searching for his name,
Rules are rules in every game
And a pseudonym enables
Cats to groove on different labels.
Did we really talk like this
With such absurd self-consciousness,
Deadly earnest, deadly cool
Young gentlemen from Public School
(A minor, country one what's more
And deft at turning out a bore)?

I think we did, and were, perhaps,
As awful as the other chaps.
Honour, though, our little clique
That dinned the Music Room each week,
Us practising musicians who
Thumped as grossly as we blew;
Authentic every turgid sound
Issuing from that hallowed ground—
Your trombone, a chrome-plated relic
Battered, crotchety and choleric,
Chris's horn (he took such pains
Not to sound slick like Harry James),
Our several drummer-boys, poor sods,
Who had to play like Baby Dodds
Clack-clackety on wooden chairs
(Ambrosia to tutored ears),
My clarinet, my vanity
When it came to "High Society",
The pianist we never had,
They'd got technique and that was bad,
The concert where "God save the Queen"
Proved trickier than "Wolverine". . . .
Tim, this was fifteen years ago
But greats are always greats, and so
I summon up a zodiac
In hope to bring the good times back;
Straw-hat Dixieland palaver,
"Monday Date" with Earl the Fatha,
Louis' "Dippermouth", the gentle
Big T, suave and sentimental,
Frankie Trumbauer's gorgeous smear
Buttering from ear to ear,
George Lewis marching in the street,
Uncertain pitch but pure and sweet,
Bubber, Tricky Sam and Rabbit
(When does brilliance become a habit?),
Hawk, the President, Bechet—
The dream is shaped, the stops obey. . . .
Oh, that's not all, not even most,
Enough, though, for a holy ghost
In whose hot name to bless you, friend,
For love goes on when poems end. . . .

Exile's Delight

A YEAR-AND-A-HALF AGO, I suggested to the Editor of this journal that themes about the country were regrettably lacking from its pages; and proposed that I, a thoroughly urban writer, should boldly invade the rural desert and report to its readers what went on there. This had the curious consequence that having set out to scan the country for a week, I have stayed there for nearly eighty; so that like Henry Morton Stanley, despatched to Africa by Gordon Bennett, my life has been altered by this casual assignment.

When we do something, we find good reasons for having done it, however irrelevant they may really be, and in this spirit, I offer up my motives for abandoning the capital; though I strongly suspect the real and unadmitted one, is that weary retreat from urban battle which often afflicts writers of middle age when, lurching dreamily among cow-pats, they attribute to mature serenity a move conditioned by exhaustion and defeat. The chief "reason", then, is that dear London is becoming quite impossible: its synthetic substitute for air, its din, its spiralling cost, its very destruction by its own loving city fathers, detract increasingly from its chief delight, which is excitement. I know this has been bewailed by each successive generation; but I think our own has the melancholy distinction not, as in the past, of remaking London into something better or even worse, but of positively gutting and despoiling it; for when you cease to take pleasure in *walking* around a city, it has entered the fatal stage of becoming a gigantic urban car-park. And yet I have played it safe, and both ways; for I haven't really abandoned the concrete jungle for the sylvan glades, but settled in Folkestone, Kent—not even a country town, but an Edwardian coastal resort, and one, be it noted by urban patriots, but an hour and twenty minutes from the London I profess treacherously to lament.

I must sing, then, the praise of Folkestone and of surrounding Kent—the first task, frankly, impossible, though the second is a pleasure. For the only real recommendation one could make of Folkestone is that it doesn't intrude itself particularly by any excess of

character or the lack of it, but is, like hundreds of the buildings in it, a sort of nondescript, amiable boarding-house. Its hey-day was at the turn of the century when, before the days of aircraft and massive summer emigration, the adventurous set off for the continent *via* Boulogne, and opulent stay-at-homes gazed out on the freezing Channel from stately, and now somewhat decrepit hotels. True, it has still, during July and August, when holiday emigrants and immigrants jostle round the tiny fishing harbour, a cosmopolitan animation: increased by those hordes who come down for the day from London to fish and swim, a vast invasion of continental youth whose social customs delight or scandalise the "residents" (as we in Folkestone are called), and a daily influx of purposeful Latin and Flemish shoppers, who carry off on the return boat in the afternoon the entire contents of Marks & Spencer's and the supermarkets.

It is this annual influx that explains how remarkably cheap Folkestone is (and indeed, other coastal towns) for nine months of the year. Throughout the three summer months, a furnished flat may cost up to £20 a week; but once all the exotic birds have flown, you can get it for as little as £5, the reason being that scores of rooms are not owned by local people, but foreigners (*i.e.*, non-Kentish) who use them for their own early holidays, and recoup their investment by letting at top prices in peak periods. Outside of these, the rents drop sensationally, the only catch being that if you wish to stay in Kent all the year round, you must either pay the temporarily inflated price in summer or become, as many older pensioners do, a sort of internal emigrant for three months to smaller non-tourist-worthy towns: a musical chairs whereby old Mr and Mrs Good, seen daily on the front in spring, are suddenly replaced successively by young Herr, Mijnheer and M Gut, Goed and Le Bon and their ladies until, as September wanes, the old locals return from exile in Benenden or Biddenden.

IT SEEMS AS IF all prices anywhere—which, for many items, one would expect to be identical throughout the nation—are mysteriously related to the cost of rent; and certainly,

Folkestone is far cheaper all round than London: indeed, I challenge anyone to go out on the town there with a fiver and fail to return with at least some change, whereas in London, as we all painfully know, this handsome note vanishes in the first hour. The quality you can buy seems better too, especially as regards food. No doubt *all* food is now adulterated chemically in one way or another, yet in Folkestone it does still taste like the real thing, and is certainly always fresher. This is particularly so for fish, fruit and veg., for which Kent is of course renowned—it is really startling to taste fish, caught that morning, which has not been weeks in a deep-freeze, even though, as gloomy local ecologists maintain, all fish and crustaceans in the area may now have been impregnated by outfall from the atomic power station at Dungeness. There's also *AIR*: I don't want to go on about ozone, or a good blow on the front, but the contrast between what you sniff at Folkestone Central, and on arrival at Charing Cross, is quite sensational: when you get into the carriage at Folkestone, it seems stuffy; when you get out at Charing Cross, the air seems just like that of the carriage you've vacated.

But the real lure of Folkestone, once you're hooked, lies in the sea, the surrounding country, and one rare quality of the Kentish coastal people.¹ As for the sea, it's true the Channel looks, at moments, like a maritime Oxford street: with so many tankers it seems less an ocean than an oil-drenched canal. But there is always something exciting about seeing France on two clear days in the month, its lighthouses at night always, and realising this is the tip of a land mass stretching all the way to Vladivostok; and as for the coastal scenery, it wasn't for nothing Boudin and Monet chose the further pearly shore to paint or, on our own side, Turner did so often. Another nice quality the sea has is that a liking for it, as for gardens, is about the only one all Englishmen and women seem to share—except, perhaps, for sport, though here class considerations may determine

preference as to games. There is also something immensely attractive about these rather ludicrous, tatty, cheery, "seaside resorts" that erupted like festoons of fairy-lights around the English coast when cheaper travel and rather better wages made a seaside holiday possible for the cooped-up urban millions. Thus, I can understand anyone being bored with a place like Folkestone, but it's almost impossible to dislike it, as one can so easily dozens of inland agglomerations.

THE FOLKESTONIANS, and other citizens of the Kentish coast, have the agreeable quality of being, apart from Cockneys, the most cosmopolitan people I've met in England. This is true, to some extent, of all those who live in ports (of which London is of course one, though the West End-based often forget this), but even more so in those of Kent because of its extreme proximity to Continental Europe. For 2,000 years or more, Kent has been the chief route of access to our country, and the first Englishman most foreigners saw, before air travel (and even to a great extent now), has been Kentish. In addition to this, Kent, besides its contingent of mariners and, until this century, smugglers, sent far more trippers to the European mainland than any other county: so easy is it to nip across for the day by air, ship, hovercraft, or even private yacht, that it's rare indeed to meet anyone on the coast who has not been to France or Belgium, at the least. The consequence of all this is that when, in the coastal towns, you enter a pub where you're not known, they don't all stare at you, and flap their ears at your funny accent, as they do elsewhere in English provincial cities. Or if they do stare, they're likely to be non-locals who, in the season, greatly outnumber the natives; for I doubt if one man in three is Kentish, and even in winter there's a large non-Kentish colony.²

However, compared with Londoners—and even Cockneys—Kentish people do have a particularity they share with others outside the capital—they seem so much more *English*. Some years ago, when Ray Gosling (amiably tireless propagandist for the virtues of non-metropolitan England) invited me to his birth-place in Northampton, I was trying to put my finger on what it was that made the citizens look so different from people in the capital, and suddenly spotted it: you could imagine most of them being Canterbury pilgrims in a way you couldn't with the Londoners. I am not speaking of the immigrant elements, but of the London-born: perhaps

¹ I resolutely refuse to become involved in the dispute as to who is a "Kentish man", and who a "Man of Kent." I have never heard either expression used by any native in the past year-and-a-half, and strongly suspect the distinction is one dreamed up by traditionalists of non-Kentish origin.

² Londoners often think of Kent as lying south of them, whereas it's very much south-east: which means that at Folkestone I am nearer to Paris than to Wales, and about the same distance from Cologne as Cardiff.

because of cross-mixture from varied counties, perhaps because even more removed from rural roots than in the provinces, the Londoners don't have—or have more rarely—that sharp, knobby, sensual look that paintings of previous centuries tell us was that of our ancestors, and which seems to survive only in faces you see in smaller provincial towns; and in Kent (which, after all, Chaucer's pilgrims visited), this is specially apparent.³

BEFORE EVOKING the rural beauties of the county, a brief, if eccentric, historical account may be apposite, since Kent is, so far as the past two millennia go, the oldest English county, and the most man-made. As modern Kent is bordered on three sides by ocean, it seems appropriate that it was once underneath the sea: whereat, in remote times, a cataclysmic eruption of chalk mountains occurred (now richly encrusted with marine fossils) to form a chain which for some 20,000 years linked the county with the continent; until, a mere 10,000 or so years ago, this barrier was eroded to form the Channel and the white cliffs so often hymned in popular and patriotic songs. (Even today, Kent seems a somewhat unstable place; for when the sea is not encroaching, by erosion of cliffs, or by covering the Goodwin sands, it beats a retreat, as in Romney Marsh where, since the time of the Romans, dozens of square miles have been reclaimed; and if we were the Dutch, we would by now long have won back the shallower tracts along the estuary of the Thames.)

³ Suspicious of my own theory, and since so many Folkestone people are not Kentish anyway, I made the experiment, over the months, of trying to guess who was Kentish, on looks alone, and then (by "discreet enquiries", as the police say) checking up on this; and I found it's not difficult to be right eight times out of ten, simply by imagining the prospect ambling beside the Wyfe of Bath.

⁴ I have yet to read a book on, for instance, the Druids, that makes any sort of sense—the authorities on ancient Celtic history all seem to be guessing. This permits one if, like myself, of Celtic origin, to glamourise the period to one's heart's content. The real Celtic golden age came, of course, much later, in the early Middle Ages, and was centred chiefly on Ireland.

⁵ It is probable Christianity reached Kent, as a minor faith, at least 200 years before St Augustine (AD 597). Lullingstone villa chapel is deemed, by archaeologists, the only certain Roman-Christian church in England.

I pass rapidly over the Celtic pre-Roman golden age (or, more precisely, bronze and iron ones), about which little precise seems really to be known,⁴ and come to the first date every schoolboy knows, which is that of the arrival of the Romans. At this time the largest Celtic kingdom was that of Cunobelin, or Cymbeline, based on what is now Colchester, to whom the local Cantii paid tribute; and it is from this tribe that Kent derives its name, as does also its capital, *Canterbury*—a rare instance of a Celtic title to an English county. Since England was manifestly the least important potential colony of the Roman empire, one may speculate why Caesar bothered to invade it. It was certainly a refuge for escaped trouble-makers from Gaul, and constituted, in its day, a sort of Cuba. There was also, in pre-Roman times, much open and clandestine trade across the Channel and Atlantic with the empire. But it is possible Caesar's chief motive, after defeating Gaul, was to keep his hand in, and impress the Roman public with this fresh conquest; also, perhaps, to garner material for another splendid war novel. At all events, he did not occupy the country during his two descents in 55 and 54 BC, and systematic settlement did not begin till a century later, under Claudius. On both these occasions, the Cantii, with more prescience than valour, let the Romans through after token engagements, leaving the glories of ineffective resistance to the more bellicose Londinii and other tribes further north.

In no time, the Romans made Kent a show colony, and traces of their presence are extraordinarily thick on the ground even to this day. Thus, almost all the chief Kentish towns are Roman: the greatest being Durovernum Cantiacorum, traces of whose forum can still be seen eight feet below Canterbury county hall.⁵ Rural farms and villas also abounded; and one may make a well-grounded case for the 400 years of Roman occupation being the most prosperous that Kent, relatively to the rest of England, has ever known. The natives, collaborators from the start (as frontier tribes are apt, or forced to be), were not treated as harshly as the rebellious Celts pushed beyond the Roman pale. As for these Romans, it is most unlikely many of them were: for after the first conquest by élite legions, colonial troops took over, if under Roman governors and centurions. If one thinks, then, of a "Roman" of the centuries of occupation, one should not visualise a hawk-nosed Latin, but much more probably a Greek, Spaniard, Syrian or Moor. (The British, in their own high imperial era, used

colonial occupation troops in the same way: Gurkhas, Rajputs, Highlanders, Irishmen and so on.) And if this be so, the British bloodstream absorbed Mediterranean and African genes long before the English themselves arrived.

For arrive, they did: from the end of the 3rd century A.D., the pirate ancestors of the present English descended from Germany and the Low Countries in shiploads to disrupt the Celtic-Roman culture. A time of troubles ensued, characterised, at one hectic moment, by a sort of Kentish *U.D.I.*, when Admiral (and chief pirate-chaser, or Count of the Saxon shores) Carausius revolted against Diocletian, and declared himself emperor at Rutupiae (Richborough) where, supported by his legions, he ruled for ten years until his murder in AD 293. This is also the period of the legendary patriot Arthur, and the equally legendary invaders, Hengist and Horsa. The Romans hung on till 407, when the emperor Honorius finally withdrew the legions.

KENT FELL not to the Angles or Saxons, but to the slightly less destructive Jutes: who left one significant legacy to the county, which was their social custom of dividing property among all sons and not, as with the Saxons, willing it only to the eldest. This may help to account for the lack of large estates in Kent, as for the prevalence of a somewhat recalcitrant yeoman spirit: Wat Tyler and Jack Cade were both Kentish men, and these still remain an obstinate people (as witness Edward Heath). And just as Kent had been a chief Roman centre, it was to become, in the centuries till the Reformation, the great Catholic one, when the first English see was established on Roman ruins at Canterbury. The real Kentish decline set in with the silting up of the Cinque Ports,⁶ from the 14th century onwards, when trade abandoned the south Kentish coast for new harbours further north. Yet

⁶ Though a lot of fuss is made in the Press from time to time about the "historic Cinque Ports", and their illustrious Lords Warden, in Kent itself they don't seem greatly interested. Hardly anyone gets the names right—viz Hastings (in Sussex), Romney, Hythe, Dover, Sandwich, with Rye and Winchelsea (also in Sussex) added later as Ancient Towns. All are now tourist resorts save Dover. Sir Robert Menzies, as Lord Warden, is always referred to firmly as "Mr Menzies."

⁷ Harold Nicolson devised the classic ground plan, his wife planted the romance—or left, when she felt it fitted, an occasional wilderness. All greatest art is classic and romantic: a truth Sissinghurst beautifully displays.

for something like 1,400 years Kent was, politically and commercially, a key English county, and vestiges of this past glory survive today.

LANDSCAPE-FANCIERS tend to like two kinds: the sensational or the secret. Thus, my own addiction to the huge skies and limpid plains of Flanders, is regarded by Alp-lovers as ludicrous; while I find that monotony of peaks one of nature's great mistakes. Certainly, Kent is for those who like a country subtle and unassertive: there are few three-star prospects, or outlooks which, in Weimar Germany, were indicated by a promising arrow labelled *Blick!*

Yet from the wealds, the panoramas are amazing; and in fact, if you want sensations of height and distance, the place to find them is not the Andes, but a flattish vista seen from sudden rises. The "Orchard of England" is another immense attraction. Some crops, however useful, just *look* horrible—sugar, cotton, sisal for example; others, like tea, corn or olives, as if designed by Raoul Dufy. And fruit trees and hops are hard to beat: the orchards, as Lorca said of olives, "opening like a fan" as you pass by; and the hop fields, especially in spring, when the vines are twisting up the cat's cradle of poles and strings, are a poet-gardener's geometry. The hop scene, alas, is in sad decline. Though Kent produces more than half the hops of England, the harvest no longer attracts south London families—a scene long England's answer to the September *vendanges*—since surrealist machines have taken over. As for the oast-houses, they have suffered the fate of late Georgian slums in Highbury: the gentry have moved in and "rebuilt" them, so that the authentic looks like fake. Even clapboard, a harmonious traditional style, now comes in plastic planks.

The country houses are not to be compared in grandeur (or ostentation) with those of lesser counties, and are usually effective because discreet. If Sissinghurst is one of the most famous, it deserves to be. What is extraordinary about the achievement of Harold Nicolson and his wife, is that the whole area of the house and gardens is really small and yet, such is the variety of plant and prospect, it seems immense. To see what an amazing gardener V. Sackville-West was, one can visit the garden in the winter: for though there are then few flowers, the positioning of the trees and shrubs and plants seems faultless. You cannot visit this romantic-classic paradise,⁷ indeed, without feelings of shame at

your own sloth. With not much money, and by toil, thought and imagination, the Nicolsonsons made a glory out of a rural slum.

THE KENTISH TOWNS seem just the right size—partly because, apart from Ashford's railway yards and the surprising East Kentish coalmines, there has been little industry. (Though expanding south London continually nibbles bits off N.W. Kent; and if the Chunnel should be bored, there will no doubt be a built-up area most of the way down the A20.) Even in Canterbury, remade after much bombing, the historic core remains: the elegiac cathedral, the King's school (attended by Christopher Marlowe and W. Somerset Maugham), and portions of the walls. Some of the "ancient" towns, as Sandwich, have been sadly Stratfordised, but there is nothing quite so awful as Sussex's adjacent Winchelsea and Rye, where even to blow your nose seems an offence in this tarted-up vulgarity. Roman roads survive surprisingly, as Watling Street from Canterbury to London. There is also a profusion of castles, luckily mostly ruined, since authentic survivals of these horrid buildings—unless one is determined to be "romantic" about them—are like Brown Houses, or banks.

THE CINQUE PORT I got to know best is Hythe, a large village now a mile from the sea, where no one is over 20 or under 60. (The whole of the south coast is turning into a geriatric ward: I am clearly partaking of a trend.) Romney Marsh is just nearby—in summer overrun with caravans and camps, but in winter, lonely, mysterious, remote. Across this trundles the renowned miniature railway—a source of innocent merriment to trippers, yet in fact one of the few lines in the land to turn a profit. But the great pride of Hythe is its Royal Military Canal, on which a "Venetian fête" occurs biennially. This was built across the Marsh to frustrate Napoleon; yet considering that the emperor crossed the Elbe and Vistula, the latter packed with ice-floes, would the forty feet of the four-foot deep canal have stopped him? Local patriots firmly believe, yes. But looking this up, I found the real purpose of the canal was to enable boats to sail inland from Rye to Hythe,

* Though but an ex-sergeant, I am mystified as to how these mini-towers could have stopped the *Grande Armée* either: surely Soult or Ney would have simply by-passed them. However, our preparations for Hitler's hordes now seem equally absurd; and in reality the Channel, then as now, was the only safeguard.

to avoid French privateers off Dungeness; and there was also some plan to flood the Marsh, Dutch-style, if the French landed on the shingle. Martello towers,* also intended to bother Boney, pop up everywhere like Swiss rolls.

What unifies all these elements is the Kentish climate: for especially on the coastal strip, this is freakish to a degree. It *can* (as at the moment of writing this in a freak blizzard) be far colder on the coast than on the Thames. But generally, Kent is just that few degrees warmer that make a fantastic difference. Not for nothing are the south walls of thousands of coastal houses glazed, whose occupants sit sunning themselves while their opposite numbers at Le Touquet freeze with the sun behind their backs. Late flowers abound: I looked out in December on *budding* roses. Tamarisk weaves all along the coastal roads, making them seem Persian. Of the fifty wild English orchids, three-quarters are found in Kent; and this is the touch-down and take-off point for masses of migrating butterflies and birds.

A SUCCULENT ACCOUNT, indeed! How wise was the writer to uproot himself! Yet even if my panegyric were excessive, there remains one Kentish quality that, London-trained, perpetually amazes me: they have not yet learned to be dishonest. (Perhaps I should not write this, lest a heap of bovver boys descend on Folkestone; but these lively lads may not read ENCOUNTER, and anyway, their favourite battlefield seems to be Margate.) Thus, it has taken me some time to learn that if you leave out the laundry *and* the money for last week's, neither vanishes—I mean into illicit hands. I have given up counting change here—they lay it in your hands as if you were a mystified Red Indian. A minicab hired in Folkestone for the run to London costs three-fifths of the fare for an identical run to Folkestone from the capital. The assumption of the Kentish stranger seems to be that you're not going to rob him, or he you.

But unable to support all this virtue, I still find pretexts to go up to London: and have discovered the city's much more delightful, once you don't have to live there. (I even get sadistic about this, and stroll through the rush-hour throng to the buffet car of the Dover express.) At the same time, you're not quite a commuter, for travelling from the city to the suburbs seems to be getting the worst of both worlds. And even after a year and a half of it, those eighty minutes across the lyrical Kentish countryside, lift your spirits.



Column

IF ONE may judge by the publicity given, both in this country and in the United States, to a single book, Miss Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics*,¹ one might guess that 1971 will be Women's Lib year, just as last year was Black Panther year, and the year before that Viet Nam year, and the year before that Student Revolt year. These days revolution comes like the Paris collections, with a change of fashion every spring, and if we are to enjoy the latest version, we ought to prepare ourselves by reading some of the relevant literature, both for and against. Key texts might be, on the one hand, Miss Millett's own book, which no self-respecting revolutionary should be without, and, on the other, Norman Mailer's 70,000-word article, "The Prisoner of Sex", recently published in *Harper's Magazine* (March).

I hasten to warn the prospective reader that he will not find his task to be an easy one, because Women's Lib appears to have the same gift of inspiring bad prose as the Black Panthers or the war in Viet Nam. Miss Millett's book reads exactly like what it once was, a Ph.D. thesis in the department of literature of Columbia University. If, as I take for granted, Women's Lib becomes a recognised course of study at American (and British) universities, the aspiring student will find it hard work indeed. The New Woman, when she is finally born, will appear trailing clouds not of glory but of verbiage at once so dense and so amorphous, like a thick sea mist, that one will scarcely be able to get a glimpse of her no doubt magnificent features.

Mailer's reply to *Sexual Politics* is almost hysterical in tone, partly no doubt because Miss Millett treats him, together with D. H. Lawrence, very unkindly; it is couched in that peculiarly vatic and prophetic style which he has adopted since he took to writing about himself in the Third Person, as if he were a member of the Trinity. The effect is all the more confusing because one is never quite sure

whether it is Mailer the Father, Mailer the Son, or Mailer the Holy Ghost who is under discussion; it all seems to depend on how the Trinity is feeling that morning, before it gets down to its daily quota of revelation about Viet Nam or Astronauts or the World Heavyweight Championship or whatever takes its fancy. And since its internal constitution and the relationship between its members seem to be as mixed-up as they have notoriously been throughout its long history, the result is quite unpredictable.

One's impression indeed, after reading Miss Millett or Mr Mailer on their chosen subject is that the source of their inspiration is not a literary one but something which more nearly resembles, or simulates, a physical orgasm and perhaps this is appropriate, because the orgasm is very important in Women's Lib, playing a role something similar to that of the *coup d'état* in revolutionary theory. They hurl words at each other like bombs, only they are sexual bombs, and have rather different mechanisms and blast effects because, naturally enough, for Mailer it is the male orgasm which is important and for Miss Millett the female; one's general impression is that never the twain shall meet.

I should perhaps add, as another source of disencouragement to the reader, that the frequent repetition of the word *shit* seems to be indispensable to both Miss Millett and Mailer in discussing Women's Lib and this lends a somewhat unpleasant aroma to their pages, as if one were reading them in the lavatory.

MY OWN ADVICE, therefore, to the first year student of Women's Lib would be to turn to Miss Shulamith Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex*,² since Miss Firestone at least has the gift of saying what she means, and says it in a manner which even a child could understand. Perhaps this is because Miss Firestone displays a certain endearing childishness of her own in stating her case. There is, after all, a kind of charm and innocence, as of a child solemnly pronouncing that the moon is made of green cheese, in such a proposition as this: "*The failure of the Russian Revolution is directly traceable to the failure of its attempts to eliminate the family and sexual repression*" (Miss Firestone's italics). The proposition may of course be true, and Miss Firestone certainly believes it to be, so true indeed that it requires no evidence to support it; but why she should expect anyone else to believe it is very difficult to understand.

I should, however, at this moment disclose that, in Miss Firestone's view, any evidence

¹ Kate Millett, *Sexual Politics* (London, Rupert Hart-Davis, £2.25; New York, Doubleday, \$7.95).

² Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex* (London, Jonathan Cape, £2.50; New York, William Morrow, \$5.95).

she did produce would be wasted on me. For after all I belong to that fatal race whose primary object and function in life is to keep ladies like herself and Miss Millett in subjection; she could have no more hope of convincing me than Professor Marcuse might have of persuading Mr Robert McNamara of the truths of neo-Marxism. In fact, my case is even worse. For after all, Mr McNamara, whether as Chairman of General Motors or President of the World Bank, does not personally oppress and corrupt his victims. He does it as it were from a discreet distance, through the intermediary of a huge corporation; while I, as a member of the master race of men, directly and at every moment of the day subject my wife and family to the indignities and injustices which are inseparable from the rule of tyranny which I exercise over them. The oppressed and exploited workers of General Motors and the World Bank do not recognise Mr McNamara as their personal enemy; my wife and family, however, should have no difficulty in identifying their oppressor, so little indeed that at an early age my sons would have realised the necessity of betraying their mother and sisters and of joining Daddy on the winning side.

It should be clearly recognised, therefore, that any scepticism I express about Women's Lib comes from a hopelessly tainted and corrupted source. In the hands of Miss Millett and Miss Firestone, the *argumentum ad hominem* acquires a totally new and destructive significance. Men, however, can hardly complain of that; they have too often used the *argumentum ad feminam* themselves.

I HOPE, however, that Miss Firestone would concede my description of the appalling state of affairs in my own home in no way conflicts with her own view either of what happens within the bosom of every family, or of the fundamental role of the family as an institution designed to maintain and perpetuate the monstrous regiment of men. In the view of Women's Lib, the family has been entrusted by men with the task of ensuring their permanent domination over women. It follows that the primary object of Women's Lib must be the destruction of the family and that any other means of achieving the emancipation of woman are merely palliatives which do more harm than good by making a fundamentally intolerable situation slightly less painful than it otherwise would be.

Miss Firestone is sufficiently logical to realise that this root-and-branch attitude to the family entails the destruction of other idols of the

modern cultural market-place; in particular, the idea of childhood as a kind of reservation or national park in which the natives may play until fully exposed, at fairly advanced ages, to the full rigours of adult life. On this subject she reveals a percipience and insight which show what a very good writer she might be if she could only be freed from the shackles of her own fanaticism. Even so, however, her emphasis on the family as almost exclusively responsible for the woes of women exposes a grave flaw in Women's Lib as a doctrine of revolutionary feminism.

Both Miss Millett and Miss Firestone concentrate their fire on the family because it is the institutional embodiment of women's eternal servitude to the male. It is through the family that she becomes a hewer of wood and a drawer of water and a slave to her husband and children. It is the family which provides the theatre in which the tragedy of her emotional and sexual life is played out. And it is the persistence and survival of the family in every form of human society which is known to us which ensures that, no matter what other social, economic, or political upheavals may take place, woman's subjection to the male is perpetuated. From this point of view, indeed, all other forms of historical change are merely superficial and illusory, because they in no way change the fundamental relationship between the sexes which the family enshrines.

But if this were so, if the family were indeed so immutable, how could Women's Lib ever achieve the goal which it has set itself—the total emancipation of women from all the forms of oppression which the male has imposed on her through the long, sad centuries of their relationship? What message of hope can either Miss Millett or Miss Firestone bring to that 51% of the human race which they regard as their natural constituency? For if the family is what they say it is, the cornerstone of their servitude, and if, by their own account, neither evolution nor revolution, so long as it is man-made, can change its character, what other doctrine can they rationally preach but a decent resignation to an oppression which is as unchangeable as the family itself?

THE EAGER STUDENT of the Women's Lib course will have discovered very early that the doctrine she is called upon to study is greatly indebted to, and presents close analogies with, two other doctrines, those of Freud and Marx, which have exercised on the minds of her contemporaries an influence with which, until now, Women's Lib could scarcely hope to compete. She may even feel a little worried because

her subject has no other intellectual progenitors however feeble; it is a slightly gloomy and desolate Pantheon that has no gods and heroes except these two masters, Miss Millett and Miss Firestone, Professor Marcuse, Genet and, of course, Masters & Johnson, whose discovery that women, if equipped with the right kind of apparatus, can have sixty orgasms an hour and still ask for more, is to Women's Lib what Marx's discovery of the labour theory of value or the materialist conception of history are to Communism.

Miss Firestone, however, makes it clear that Women's Lib's debt to Marx or Freud is very much the kind of debt which Marx himself owed to Hegel; that is to say, a strictly limited one, which consisted in inheriting an intellectual apparatus which he adapted to purposes entirely opposed to any intended by its inventor. If Marx made Hegelianism useful by standing it on its head, Women's Lib has done the same for Marxism by subjecting it to a sex-change. Miss Firestone makes this explicit in her first chapter. "The doctrine of historical materialism", she says, "much as it was a brilliant advance over previous historical analysis, was not the complete answer." This was because Marx and Engels had omitted sex from their analysis, and had failed to see that the origins of the class war were ultimately not of an economic, but a biological or "psycho-sexual" character, rooted in the division of labour between male and female in the process of reproduction.

Marx's mistake, therefore, according to Miss Firestone, was not in thinking that all history is the history of the class war, but in his failure to identify correctly the origin and character of the classes which wage the war. It proceeds, not in the factory or the street but in the uterus, and only recently has scientific and technical innovation equipped women with the weapons with which women can win it, in particular birth control, extra-uterine conception, and mechanical stimulation of the clitoris. Marx himself was fond of describing revolution in sexual terms, and especially in terms of childbirth. He would be surprised, I think, and disconcerted, to find how easily Miss Firestone translates gynaecology into the terms of the Communist Manifesto.

As with Marx, so with Freud. For Freud also was of service to Women's Lib because of his discovery of the crucial part which sexuality plays in the development both of civilisation and of the discontents to which it gives rise. Only he mistook the nature of those discon-

tents, believing that they could be eliminated or made tolerable by therapy based on psychoanalysis, when in fact they could only be resolved by revolutionising the civilisation of which they are the consequence. Marx failed to take account of the "psycho-sexual" basis of the class war; Freud failed to see that only class war could solve the troubles of the psyche. Both lacked the specifically feminist insight which would have enabled them to view their own discoveries in the proper perspective offered by Women's Lib.

I do not think that Miss Firestone's analysis of either Freud or Marx is very successful; it is impossible to do justice to complex and highly organised systems of ideas simply by altering their terms of reference, but by doing so Miss Firestone manages to create a strange Women's Lib world in which political and sexual terms are so freely interchangeable that one can never be quite sure whether, in the most literal sense, one is talking about society or the womb, politics or gynaecology. One rather feels that for Miss Firestone they are the same thing.

In the case of Marx, however, her method has an immediate and practicable advantage. The adoption of a Marxist terminology enables her to draw the strictest of lines between Women's Lib and those other advocates of women's rights who confine themselves to demands, not for total revolution, but for an alleviation of those practical social and economic disabilities from which women continue to suffer. For such allies Miss Firestone has nothing but contempt. She would as soon see them as fellow workers as Mao would recognise a socialist comrade in Mr Harold Wilson; and she charts their deviations from the faith with an ideological rigidity which Lenin himself might have envied. Yet the exercise seems to miscarry. On the one hand, it prompts the suspicion that Miss Firestone is primarily interested in staking out a claim for Women's Lib in that area of American culture where no cause can prosper unless it can claim the label of "revolutionary", whether with reference to pop-music, drug addiction, racial equality, or university education. On the other hand, behind the dogmatic fanaticism there is the airiest disregard for the practical means by which any actual improvement in the status of women is likely to be achieved.

It is no doubt true that "reformism" often stands in the way of revolution; it is equally true that sham revolution is often the greatest enemy of genuine reform. R

Space Scene with the Rooster

"Shall I at least perceive
the instant of the last touch,
the earth's rattle and the scorched exhaust?"

So the sobbing homunculus asked me
smelling the handkerchief he had snatched
from his sweetheart's tearful eyes
at their last date on earth,

As, swaddled,
he boarded the space cylinder.

She had whispered to him:
"I don't know whether you're leaving
for new life
or for death."

A shivering wonder reigned everywhere.
The people, sensing how grandiose the feat was,
refrained from shouting:
"See you again." —

Real consternation, however, overwhelmed
the globe with the news
that the manned space-cylinder
had succeeded in entering space.

He himself saw nothing;
while the stormy flight of the space creatures
poured unheard into his dull hearing,
he was not far-seeing enough to perceive it.

The former echoes of the earth
still rang stronger in him;
a mere terrestrial sigh could startle him:

"Since she's no more,
listen,
these sounds make me glad.

Cease chattering and listen."

I turned and beheld
a raft like Noah's Ark,
rolling nearby,
full of earth's animals.

The homunculus said:
"I hardly had time to send my message to the
earth:
'Let the creatures of earth
go forward into this void.'"

As he told me this,
with the few words still left to him,
I looked at him with pity.

I winked at him
and tried to draw his attention
to the fabulous undreamt-of choruses
reverberating from the flight of the creatures,

raging still more fabulously,
with a still more space-like hum,

compared to my companion's defective hearing.

W. H. AUDEN writes: "Considered by many of his compatriots to be the best living Croatian poet, NIKOLA ŠOP was born at Jajce, Bosnia, in 1904. He was crippled for life during Hitler's bombardment of Belgrade in 1941." Two long poems, "Cottages in Space" (taken from his volume *Space Poems*, 1957) and "Space Visits", both translated by Brusar and Auden, were published in the November 1969 and May 1965 ENCOUNTER.

The winging birds of the earth,
tense and startled,
topped that giant chorus
of all the space creatures,

blaring unceasingly

and swelling
beside my ear.

The homunculus babbled:

"Listen to the nightingales, the blackbirds,
the swallows.

Oh, how I like these sounds of the earth,

Listen to the roosters.

Will all this echo again
through this universal void
and silence?

No femininity exists any more,
no pulsing roundness;
let at least the beasts of earth live here,
their muscles and wings
spread through space."

Thus the homunculus murmured to me,
using up the last words
he had left in his mind.
The multitudinous flight of the fauna of earth
swept me towards the earthly raft;
I could hardly pull the homunculus with me.

There I saw the forms
of the animals that remained.

In rhinoceros, elephant,
hippopotamus,

I recognised the inertia of earthly nature.

The persistent clumsiness of the mammoth,
whom the ice had caught up with and buried.

The stuttering chirping of the birds
is the only beginning of a winged song
in the direction of limitless space,
fluttering, however, they cannot lift
their heavy little bodies.
Therefore, let them with their wings
and chirps and songs
join the flight of the space fauna.

The ardent stream, the mighty song swept them
up.
Waving in the tumultuous choruses,
their earthly chirp
died out.

But still the few surviving sounds,
reverberating muffled
through the space hurricane,
startled me.

The sounds that remind one
of the earth,
that make earth earth.

The happy memory refreshed me but for a
moment.
As the stream carried the reminders away,
into the whirlpool of new, creative forces,
everything suddenly disintegrated and vanished

In the void of the illusive emptiness.

With what trepidation I saw
the hulks of elephant,
rhinoceros and other earthly beasts
vanish in a trice,
as soon as the squall of the unfamiliar balance
seized and carried them away.
With what increasing forgetfulness I watched
the domestic animals
arrive from the earth in protective cylinders

to settle space,
and propagate the life of the earth ad infinitum.

In protective cylinders
with artificial gravity
set by terrestrial surveyors
with inert little weights
cut out from
weight-in-itself.

The domestic animals, leaving
their earth-oxygen cages,
remained whole
within the span of their new weights.

Thus a sheep remained a sheep,
an ox an ox,
still pulling a plough to plough the void.

The domestic fowl themselves
remained whole,
although frightened and screeching,
endlessly flapping their wings.

Look, they happily moved up
the whole village with all its riches.

Wheat itself they launched up,
fruit and vegetable seeds.

The wondering sower has but
to wave his hand:
he knows that vacancy is the best soil.

My little companion,
both exulting and awe-struck
by the earthly ululation,

roared mountainously:

"Oh, you earth, with your village
and your rooster,

oh, you earth of human forms,
if only I could reach you once again."

The reply from below startled me:
"Not yet.
Not yet."
Thus the earth answered.

Meanwhile, propelled
powerfully into an arc,
I zoomed farther up,

Fearing lest I
should entangle and lose myself
in the earthly vegetation
suddenly sprouting and flourishing.

For I doubted if I could
wing my way
through the heady mellowness,
through the vintages and the harvests
which shot up from the space soil and grew rank

in the void.

Thus, hurled into inanity
and already bewitched by transfiguration,
I still could hardly tear myself away
from the memory
of strawberries,
of peaches,

and other tasty
terrestrial fruits.

I swung still higher;
the stream of the space creatures hushed behind
me.

By chance I turned once again,
but needlessly,
since by then I had become all-sided;

turning, I noticed the homunculus down there,
hurrying towards the translated animals,
the country stock;

not hearing my call,
to sprint to me full-tilt,

he remained amidst the bedlam
of the screeching poultry.

Then I soared up
with such a force,
such a swing,

That it whirled all around me
for long afterwards.

No more could I even
encounter the space creatures,
the animals shot up from the earth

as at first I had done, beholding muzzles
agape, surprised and terrified.

I gave the last
human call that I remembered,
but the homunculus did not hear it.

He watched the courtyard rooster
peck at the meteors
flying past,

rumbling sullenly.

Translated by Branko Brusar and W. H. Auden

FILM

All Flesh is Trash

By John Weightman

BECAUSE I WROTE an "understanding" article on *Flesh* a few months ago, Vaughan Films kindly invited me to a private showing of *Trash*, the next item in the Warhol Factory oeuvre. As I write, the question of whether or not it will be put on commercially is undecided, and so anything I say may be taken as an argument for or against, especially since—I am told—the *Flesh* article was used as an argument in favour of that film, *post facto*. This is rather inhibiting, because my views on censorship are chaotic. On the one hand, I am opposed to it, on the ground that everything about human nature, either good or bad, should be said, since the only thing that ultimately satisfies the mind and helps development is the truth; on the other hand, I realise that the indiscriminate presentation of the truth can often do a lot of harm, before it begins to do any good, especially in sexual matters, where imitativeness is such a powerful force. Even supposing that *Flesh* is quite a good film, as I think it is, I don't see how one can know whether or not its influence on the young will be good; since the hero is a young prostitute, it may stimulate male prostitution. Who knows whether the influence of *Look Back in Anger* was good or not? Perhaps it encouraged some young men to be more uncouth and cad-dish to their wives than they might otherwise have been. Even *Hamlet* might promote procrastination and messy solutions, and I have known Biblical illustrations induce lewd thoughts. So I claim no ability to be definite about the general social effects of a work of art; the best I can do is fumble towards some awareness of whether or not the work seems satisfactory in itself.

Nor am I clear about the intentions of the members of the Warhol Factory, even after reading an immensely long but very woolly interview with Paul Morrissey in *The Rolling Stone*, that interesting paper which, apart from the swear-words, is as chapel-minded and pompous as *The Times* used to be. I still

don't know whether the felicities I thought I saw in *Flesh* were accidental or deliberate. Are these people dedicated to art, or are they cashing in on pornography and having fun with a hysterical market? Perhaps they themselves aren't quite sure. However the films are there, and one can only say how one finds them.

IN THE PUBLICITY HANDOUT, *Trash* is termed a comedy, and I must admit that some of the younger members of the audience laughed merrily at several points. But the humour, if humour it is, is so black that I couldn't raise a smile. I give the film full marks for a certain kind of sordid realism, which makes even Buñuel's exercises in cruelty or Fellini's *Satyricon* look quite stagey. This is total abjection, not simply man without God or man alienated from society, but Beckettian man in the dust-bin waiting for death. Whereas *Flesh* seemed to convey a curious marginal happiness existing among perverts and drop-outs, *Trash* takes more or less the same characters and shows the reality of their destitution and sickness. To complete the picture, at the two or three points in the story where they come into contact with "normal" people, the latter turn out to be just as sick, but in a less honest way. Therefore, the drop-outs cannot be judged in relationship to a supposedly healthy society, since by implication there is, or can be, no such thing. All flesh is trash; beauty is non-existent, sex is appallingly ugly and politics cannot possibly be real, since they would suppose a minimum of sense and coherence which is lacking in human nature. To find this sort of thing funny, one would have to be able to laugh at Zola or Breughel. The spectacle of a scarecrow of a woman (but is she a woman or a female impersonator?), all writhing arms and legs like an infuriated octopus, masturbating with a beer-bottle because her lover is impotent, would have turned even Zola's stomach. As cinema, the scene was successful, in the sense that it didn't produce that feeling of rhetorical phoneyess which is the usual weakness of horror sequences, but I can't say that I enjoyed it, especially in the queasy state that follows gastric 'flu.

WE ARE TOLD that the Warhol films are improvised, and certainly they begin and end abruptly, move jerkily from point to point, and pay no attention to the sort of details the continuity girl was supposed to look after. Still, there is a kind of storyline in *Trash*. Joe, the previously beautiful hero of

Flesh, is now a drug-addict, spotty and unhealthy-looking, and continuously in a semi-stupor as he roams around looking for the next fix. Heroin has deprived him of his potency, and the main joke is that various women try in vain to excite him. He is constantly taking his clothes off to oblige or to earn a few dollars (and also, no doubt, to give the audience a view of that valuable property which presumably has been insured by now, as film-stars' legs once were), but each attempt ends in a fiasco, usually with recriminations. He remains woodenly impervious to this and keeps drifting back to the filthy room he shares with his girl (or boy?) friend, Holly, a grotesque weirdie whose occupation is salvaging bits of garbage from the tip and treasuring or selling them. As a side-line, she pushes drugs to schoolboys in the hope that, having stupefied them, she can submit them to oral rape. In one nightmarish scene, she does just this, after assuring the bespectacled youngster that the stuff in the syringe is "just like penicillin." I think Miss Holly, with her fuzz of dirty hair, her bird-like movements and her mad chatter, must take the all-time prize for ghoulishness. If Bette Davis has seen this film, she is no doubt green with envy, because nothing she did in her heyday was anything like as intense. There is no suggestion that Holly is an actress, although in a way I suppose she must be; she just exists in her sheer and total awfulness.

It is clear that Joe and Holly form a kind of pair, like Vladimir and Estragon in *Waiting for Godot*, but Beckett's play is almost jolly compared with *Trash*. Why does Joe take drugs and why are we submitted to slow close-ups of him sticking the needle into his arm? Presumably because life has no meaning and one may as well commit suicide in that way as in any other. Drugs don't give access to any higher reality; they merely rot the body and anaesthetise the mind. Why is Holly a sort of dung-fly fluttering around the dust-bins? Because civilisation is essentially the production of waste; nature itself is a senseless process of consumption. And the couple is convincingly differentiated in that the man, though impotent, is male; he ultimately doesn't give a damn and remains as impassive as—to use the American expression—a drug-store Indian. The woman, or female impersonator, goes on fussing, as a bird will try to build a nest in hopeless circumstances.

AS I SUGGESTED BEFORE, the horror doesn't lie simply in the masturbation scene, the oral rape, and another sequence which shows

attempted copulation with a naked woman in an advanced state of pregnancy; it also comes from contact with so-called normal people, in two long sequences.

In the first, Joe wanders into a middle-class apartment to try and steal something, but instead comes across the young housewife who takes a fancy to him. Her husband comes home and also shows a rather greasy interest in the drop-out. Joe has a bath, during which the young woman stays with him, fondling him and telling him in a shrill, wailing voice about obscene encounters in her past. She proposes various orgies to him but all he wants is more dope, which she goes to get from somewhere else in the block. Then Joe takes the drug and falls into a stupor, while the young couple insult each other in the most hysterical manner, as they lug his body around to prevent him becoming comatose. In this strange episode, his naked form is seen lolling in the various attitudes of the descent from the Cross, as the slanging match proceeds, revealing the falsity of their relationship. Finally, they push him out on to the landing and throw his clothes after him; so much for the Good Samaritan act.

The other scene is a visit from a Social Security official to Joe and Holly's slum. Inspired by her sister's real pregnancy, Holly has the idea of slipping a cushion under her skirt and asking for "Welfare." It is, incidentally, her ambition to "get on Welfare", which she feels is her right, since "I was born on Welfare and raised on Welfare." However, the dapper, talkative official is a shoe-fetichist, who is fascinated by a pair of elaborate silver slippers Holly has found in the garbage. He proposes a bargain: he will fill in the form favourably, if he can have the shoes. But Holly will not part with the shoes, which are her only ones, and in any case she considers them to be irrelevant to the central point, that is, her absolute right to Welfare. In the excitement of the debate, she stands up and the phoney bun drops out of the oven.

THE GHASTLY THING is that real children are no doubt born quite frequently into this sort of situation, which is equal to the worst miseries of the 19th-century slums. It would be interesting to know whether the Warhol Factory has deliberately done a Zola on the drop-out myth or, perhaps tried to produce the *Uncle Tom's Cabin* of the drugs-and-sex scene. Or is *Trash* not really a work of art at all, but just another spontaneous boil on the face of contemporary American culture?

POETRY

Gwenallt

On a Welsh Poet—By NED THOMAS

I MUST HAVE BEEN thirty years old before I heard Gwenallt's name, and only recently have I read all his poetry. At first there is something shameful in an admission of this sort—rather as if an educated Englishman had not heard of Eliot. But there is this difference, that while such an Englishman would be eccentric, I was fairly typical.

A remarkably high proportion of Welsh men and women go on to some form of higher education, but even among those who are from Welsh-speaking homes, few are educated in their own language and literature. Except for those who make Welsh their special subject of study, it has been merely one of the many school subjects which one leaves behind. And since the sixth-former aiming at a university place is expected to have some general English culture, he probably comes to know Eliot and Auden and the contemporary playwrights writing in English.

My own ignorance of Welsh literature was reinforced by spending the greater part of my school life outside Wales. In this respect I was again typical of many Welsh children growing up in professional families who had to find employment outside Wales. My Welsh was largely domestic and colloquial—I would still find it difficult to write an academic essay in

Welsh—and by the time I came to Gwenallt I knew not only more about English literature, but more of Russian and Spanish literature than I did of Welsh.

It was not that I knew nothing at all. I had read some rather simple anthology pieces at school; while at Oxford I had battled with the late mediaeval Dafydd ap Gwilym, and got some enjoyment from him. I had taught myself something about *cynghanedd*, the complex alliterative patterns of the Welsh strict metres. At home there were books from my parents' days at a Welsh University college—the poets of the time (Williams-Parry I liked in particular).

But whenever I spoke to my English friends about Welsh literature, I felt I was making a special plea for something beautiful but arcane and demanding its own standards of judgment. Eventually I came to accept this valuation for myself and the small amount of Welsh literature which I knew rather confirmed me in my view; it seemed to belong to a technically more intricate, but to a morally oversimplified and lyrically overblown world.

LOOKING BACK, I CAN SEE that this attitude derived from the low level of my knowledge of Welsh. I had hit in my reading on a period that was the equivalent of a mixture of Wordsworth and Masefield and Housman, while I knew virtually nothing of earlier periods, and nothing of the last forty years which can claim to be one of the most important in Welsh literature. I was wholly out of touch with the Welsh higher culture which was carried on by a rather small group of people who had few means of communicating with the population at large. In the years I spent at school in Wales I can remember nothing crossing my path that came from the pen of Gwenallt or of Saunders Lewis. Whether this was more the fault of the

D. GWENALLT JONES was born in 1899 and died in 1968.

NED THOMAS (born in 1936) has lived in Wales since 1968, and is Lecturer in English at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth. In 1966-67 he was British Council Exchange Lecturer at the University of Moscow. He edits "Planet" and is TV Critic for the "Times Educational Supplement." He is currently working on a critical study of Conrad and on a novel. "The Welsh Extremist" will shortly be published by Victor Gollancz.

school's or of my own orientation towards success through the English examination system I cannot be sure, but I think it must have been a fairly common experience in those days.

It is part of a wider pattern: the person with a strong Welsh cultural background in his family can keep it up by conscious effort—going to Welsh meetings of all sorts, to *eisteddfodau*, buying Welsh books; but the things that press themselves on everyone's attention—television, advertising, the daily press, the whole commercial side of life—are in English. The person who has no strong motivation, or little time to spare to be consciously Welsh, drifts away from the educated culture and from Welsh, except perhaps as a domestic language.

Then again, the gap between modern literature in Welsh and English so often seemed to be the gap between the country and the city. Many Welsh-speakers have been brought up in rural areas, and for them the language and literature is inseparable from this pre-industrial landscape. The child grows up, becomes a teacher, a civil servant, a lawyer, works in the large English cities, but a corner of the feelings is forever kept inviolate from the ugliness and complexity of urban life with its impersonal relations—and *that* corner is Welsh.

But the corollary of this view is that Welsh literature does not cope with the modern world. I am not thinking of the awkwardness of some of the technical vocabulary translated into Welsh, but of a more serious thing: from what I knew of Welsh literature it seemed as if industrialisation, which had marked all our lives, had not really been experienced in Welsh.

IN THESE ASSUMPTIONS I was wrong. There were industrial communities still speaking Welsh in Carmarthenshire that I did not know of. I remember my amazement at discovering, on a visit to a small pit in East Carmarthenshire, that the language spoken underground was Welsh. But of course it is not the setting of a poem or a novel, or its place of origin that matters. One can observe the modern world with equal hope of arriving at the truth from a flat in the metropolis or from an isolated farm. It is a quality of consciousness that counts, and no modern consciousness, on whatever bit of the earth it bases itself, can ignore the phenomena of urbanisation and industrialisation. Were there Welsh writers who

took this world into their consciousness as they wrote about Wales?

Parallel with the Welsh/English, rural/urban dichotomy in my mind was a doubt about the compatibility of socialism and nationalism. I do not mean nationalism in a strictly political sense, but as pride in traditional forms of Welsh life. The religious and puritanical element was a particular obstacle, and if one speaks to Welshmen in the less conservative professions in England—journalists, television people, teachers—it is to this that they always revert.

It is not hard to construct a picture of a hill country with a conservative ethical code, tribal family systems, attachment to its history, contrasting with a modern, urban, swinging social democracy. And this is a view that can be held when one is out of Wales, or within it and not immersed in what is happening. But everywhere changes, the elements remain perhaps, but the balance and configuration changes. It is a special danger for exiles that they ignore this.

I mention all this half-knowledge, this hesitation about modern Welsh literature—which after all is modern Welsh thinking—in order to show how Gwenallt's writing broke across them. He experienced in Wales, and through the Welsh language, in the tensions of his own life, the pull between the rural and industrial cultures, between socialism and nationalism, Marxism and Christianity. Stylistically, linguistically, he included the life of the steelworks and the farm, while not forgetting the long poetic tradition in which he worked. He is our national poet of the century not because he celebrates Wales but because he expresses the passions and tensions at work here without leaving anything out. I am more sure of his greatness because his eventual, religious synthesis is not my own.

AT ALLTWEN, PONTARDAWE, in the Swansea valley, in an area that was largely Welsh-speaking then, but is now highly anglicised, Gwenallt grew up with strikes and suffering. The whole picture is there:

*As we rode bicycles stolen from the scrap
And played rugby for Wales with pigs' bladders
I never thought I should hear how two of my
friends
Spewed out the dirty red of their lungs into
a bucket.*

Behind the verses that follow must be the death of his own father who was killed by molten metal:

*We would slip into the Bibles parlours and look
aghast
At the charcoal of a body, the ashes of a voice.
There above coffin-lids screwed down before
their time
We learnt the red collects of rebellion, the
litanies of violence.*

*This was not natural death, that comes with
the tread
Of the prison warden, clanking his warning keys,
But the industrial leopard that leaps out
sudden-sly
From the middle of fire and water on men at
their work.*

Then there are the women,

*Dumbly courageous wives with a fistful of
blood-money
And a bucketful of death for remembrance
to the end of their lives
Carrying coal, tending the garden, chopping
firewood and turning
Ever more often to the story of Christ on
the Cross.*

And there is the anger that never left Gwenallt:

*Palm Sunday, and I would lay upon their graves
Silicotic roses, lilies pale as gas,
And recollect among the unweathered stones
Curses and blasphemies spoken at their funerals.*

But it is never simple protest poetry. He can see the strange beauty of the suddenly quiet industrial villages during the Depression:

*The stack no longer opens its flame-ringed
umbrella of smoke
Over the cup of our world.
The screech of hooters and the running
clangour of cranes
No longer come between us and the slow
uplands.
The stars are all scrubbed clean.*

Brought up in Welsh Calvinistic Methodism, he reacted first against institutional Christianity in the direction of the kind of Christian anarchy he found in late Tolstoy, but this view hardened, as he looked around, into complete rejection of Christianity, and, as he read Lenin, into full Marxism:

Capitalism was something living to us. We saw the poverty, famine and near-famine, the hovel-like houses, mothers growing old before their time, the cruelty of soldiers and policemen during the strikes, doctors putting tuberculosis instead of silicosis on the death certificates to avoid the paying of compensation to relatives, and the bodies coming home after the accidents. Years later my father's body came home after he had been burnt to death by molten metal, and that unnecessarily. When, in the funeral sermon, the minister said that it was God's will, I cursed his sermon and his God with all the hauliers' swear-words that I knew, and when they sang the hymn at the graveside, I sang in my heart the *Red Flag* . . .

But Gwenallt's parents came from Carmarthenshire, and on his visits to relatives there he saw a relatively prosperous farming community living the traditional simple, healthy and godly life; the beauty of the countryside was matched by an orderliness in life and death which gave man a secular dignity as well as his dignity before God. Carmarthenshire is celebrated in a whole series of poems written throughout Gwenallt's lifetime.

*How naturally the Chapel took its place in the
country,
Alive with the Gospel, warm with the hymns
of Pantycelyn,
Dafydd Jones from Caeo, Tomos Lewis
from Talyllchau,
All the county's hymn-writers.
Outside stood the farmers' carts,
And from the stable the whinny of horses
Broke across prayer and sermon.
And round about in August there were fields
Heavy with oats and wheat, so that only a wall
Seemed to divide the Saviour in the Chapel
From the Creator of the World outside.*

It is fair to say that he idealised the old rural life, in this being typical of many Welshmen. It is not that he says things that are not true. Wales in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was a remarkable collection of small, politically radical, religiously cultured communities. In his last poem to Carmarthenshire written on the occasion of Gwynfor Evans's election for that constituency, Gwenallt recalled the mixed political and religious history of the county—the Rebecca riots, the mystical hymn-writer, Williams Pantycelyn. There is a great tradition of courage, of culture, of placing human qualities first, that a Welshman can still feel when he looks to this period.

WHAT GWENALLT LEFT OUT was the rural poverty, the damp cottages, the puritanical repression, the deaths from tuberculosis. Anyhow he did not imagine that we could go back to the old life. The important thing which the Welsh countryside offered him, and which it offers us, is the image of a really human society; and for Gwenallt, man could only have his proper place when he placed nothing above himself except God.

WHEN socialists and anarchists analyse the structures of oppression they use the language of Marxism, technical-sounding, Germanic, full of *-isms*. But when they have tried to imagine the good life, how often it is the social relationships of the village that are recalled, with the modern conveniences added.

There is a strong rural strain in socialism. One should not forget that the growth of industry, which herded men into the factories and slums, also broke up the traditional values of the country communities, that here too the pressures became more acute. The country is quite as capable of being revolutionary as the city under a certain degree of pressure and with certain leadership. We have the village communes of the Spanish anarchists in the Civil War, the rural-based revolutions of Castro and Mao. When the vision of Utopia is held out at the end of Brecht's *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* it is a picture of the ideal rural society:

*But you, you who have listened to the story of
the Chalk Circle,*

*Take note what men of old concluded:
That what there is shall go to those who are
good for it*

*Thus: the children to the motherly, that they
prosper,*

*The carts to the good drivers, that they are
well-driven*

*And the valley to the waterers, that it bring
forth fruit.*

One can hardly imagine a complex industrial society organised on these lines. And yet, this is what our minds must be stimulated to do, to reassert man's dignity and supremacy over the impersonal structures which he has created and which now dominate him. The image of the personal, caring, rural community survives not to call us back but to give us strength to create new and more humane ways of living together. I sometimes wonder how to interpret that obscure clause in the *Communist Manifesto* which looks forward to the abolition of the distinction between town and country. It is perhaps obscure enough to allow one a modern metaphorical interpretation—the bringing of people together for necessary social organisation without turning them into a mass huddled in the shadow of all-powerful institutions—and also a literal one, that for a truly human life we must spread the population more evenly over the habitable land. Although the Welsh national movement is now as strong, or stronger in the industrial south than in the rural areas, it carries deeply within it the idea that the whole of the country must be developed and repopulated. The ugly proletarian villages of the south and the deserted uplands of the centre are the reverse sides of the same phenomenon, the Industrial Revolution, which bore on the same nation, the Welsh. They are not two peoples, the hill-farmers and the tin-plate workers; their Christianity and their so-

cialism are not in opposition, but facets of one aspiration. It took Gwenallt to express this sense of unity, of triumph over old (but not very old) divisions:

*We, the industrial people, could not wander
Through the factory-yards like pilgrims
With empty pockets and heavy pack.
On Saturdays justice was our cry,
On Sunday we sang your own sweet hymns.*

*There was Mabon and Calo, Keir Hardie and
Crug-y-bar.*

*The span of the Cross is much wider
Than their Puritanism and their Socialism*

*And there is a place for the fist of Karl Marx
in His Church*

*Farm and Furnace march together
The humanity of the pit, the godliness of
the country,*

*Tawe and Tywi, Canaan and Wales, Earth and
Heaven.*

ALL GWENALLT'S PUBLISHED POEMS date from after his return to Christianity. The essay in the symposium *Credaf* (1943) from which the earlier prose quotation came, tells how he became a Christian and a nationalist. He came to suspect that there was an element of power-seeking mixed in with socialist idealism. The unions were there to bargain for more pay. They did not strike to establish socialism, or even to increase the old-age pension. He noted that there was a division between the skilled and the unskilled worker, and that only a small and able section of the workers took an interest in union politics. A miner who was a good speaker became a checkweighman, a union official, and moving further and further from the coal-face, ended up in Parliament. "It was the workers' leaders in Parliament who betrayed the workers on strike." Gwenallt wrote, thinking probably of how the miners of South Wales hung out and were ground into the dust after the General Strike of 1926 had been broken by the Government.

During the First World War Gwenallt had spent two years in Wormwood Scrubs and Dartmoor as a conscientious objector. This is the basis of his early and only novel, *Plasau'r Brenin* (The King's Mansions), a striking if schematic piece of work. When he came out he found that M.P.s who had been in prison for the same cause were voting in favour of more warships: "Jobs extinguished the fire, power turned rebels into conservatives. Marx showed that self-interest lurked behind bour-

geois ideals, and he was right, but couldn't self-interest lurk behind Communist ideals?"

*The Utopia has gone from the top of
Gellionen,
Abstract humanity, the classless and
frontierless world;
And the only things that today lie on the
floor of memory
Are family and community, man's suffering
and sacrifice.*

How suddenly illuminating it is for a Welshman to find that here, in what is outwardly a rotting province of post-imperial England, the tragedy of European socialism has been experienced and formulated in our own idiom. Here Gwenallt seems to join hands with the Silone who left the Abruzzi to follow international Communism, and eventually came back from the theories to his original humanitarian impulse and to write about the society he knew.

Wales now becomes for Gwenallt the image of a human society fighting the pressures of a dehumanising industrial, military and capitalist structure, identified with the British Empire ("I have hated the British Jezebel since I was a lad of 17"). He admitted that many things had been improved by Socialist Governments, but for him the framework was still oppressive, and was bound to be so because Socialists, like other people with purely secular ends, put their own power first. For him the truly human society exists always in the light of God. In his late poem on the terrible loss of children's lives when through negligence a coal tip swept away the primary school at Aberfan, his anger at the authorities flares out and he also reaffirms the human community which is created by suffering.

*Wasn't it Keir Hardie who held that the tips
should be buried
In the depths of the pit to stop gases and
roof-fall and flood?
But our modern Socialists, like the capitalists
before them, believe
That produce is more important than people,
that cost is what counts.
In suffering there is depth; and it is this depth
that draws,
That draws close together, women and children
and men,
This suffering that has kept our communities
in the south so human.*

When Gwenallt brought the rural past, and the Christian past of Wales to bear on the industrial scene, he gave it a new and beautiful and spiritual colouring. When the miners and steelmen escaped from the inhumanity of their work they kept pigs on smallholdings, dug the

garden or attended the chapels which still held out the idea of a man's precious individual worth.

*At evening on the hill, the workers tended
their pigeons
After the day's slavery.
Each coop at the end of a garden
Released its cloud of white.
They were sent to North Wales and to England,
and set free
From their baskets into heaven,
But they came back from all that distant beauty
To our neighbourly poverty in the South.
They circled the pillars of smoke in the sky,
Colouring the curve of grey
A mass of beauty amid the fog.
The shape of the Holy Spirit above the valley.
The smoke was sanctified by the Spirit,
The worker became a person,
The money system was transported into the
order of grace
And the Unions were joined in the family
of God.*

WE NOW COME to something in Gwenallt—and in Wales—that both Socialists and Christians can find hopeful. Religion and rebelliousness are compatible. In reverting to Christianity (though his was never a very conventional faith) Gwenallt did not give up the fight for a better secular order. His religion did not take him away from action in the world as Eliot's did, or Auden's. This was I think, because the whole culture with which he identified himself was in a state of resistance to authority. The American Negro's Christianity offers a parallel. Gwenallt does not separate into religious and political periods and very often the two elements are there in the same poem.

Because Welsh non-conformism identified with the Welsh people, the ordinary Welsh people, at a time when they were largely illiterate and were expected to listen to services conducted in English by the Established Church for the landlord class, it had from the start a courageous and radical face, as important as its puritanical one, though less well-known. The outsider thinks of the Welsh non-conformist tradition as existing in tension with the broader, more tolerant ways of Anglicanism and secularism. But it has its internal tension, and has always had it, between the puritanism which (in Richard Hoggart's phrase at the "Lady Chatterley" trial) consists in having "a strong sense of responsibility to your own conscience" and the puritanism which is a question of social observance. The first current has always had a strong feeling for social justice, and it is this which makes religion a less conservative force in Wales than in England.

Moreover, this protesting current has always seemed more *Welsh*, since churchmen who supported secular authority, e.g., preaching the just war in 1914-1918, inescapably found themselves supporting *English* authority.

Gwenallt, in his rural poems and his industrial poems, in the connections he draws between the two kinds of Welsh community, has the continuity of Welsh history itself. His religion and his rebelliousness fit a Welsh pattern, are not in opposition but run together back into the Welsh past. The chief character in his novel thinks back from prison to his home in Carmarthenshire:

It was important for the prisoner to keep hold of his memories, he had to hold tight to the past, to the land where he first saw the light of day, to the people whose blood was in his veins, whose strength was in his brain, whose determination was in his soul. If he were to lose his memories he would be like a rootless tree at the mercy of every mad wind. . . .

Because he had a firm hold of this past with its qualities of courage and humanity in a period when many Welshmen, English and Welsh-speaking alike, lost touch with them, he is a great giver of strength; and because he includes in his work currents that have at times seemed to be opposed to each other, he is a great giver of unity.

Perhaps he will eventually be thought of as a religious writer, with some of Charles Peguy's worker-Christianity, some of Simone Weil's pacifism, one of the figures who detaches Christianity from its burden of class allegiance and institutionalism and makes it again worthy of respect. He would have agreed with Andrei Sinyavsky who wrote: "In the end there is nothing but God, who includes all. But the Church has sinned through being too well brought up. Christ's church has become confused with a finishing school for upper-class girls. . . ." One does not have to be a Christian to see that in some fusion of the Socialist ideals of social justice with the valuation which religion puts on the individual soul there lies a hope for a more truly civilised society.

GWENALLT DIED on Christmas Eve 1968. His lines on Pantycelyn suggest themselves as his own epitaph:

He looked on Wales as a wilderness under the light of God
And strove to make her part of the kingdom of Christ.

But there is another line of Gwenallt's that sums up his work as a poet of courage and resistance. He was himself "the traditional, revolutionary wind" and his poems are quoted at political meetings up and down Wales.

He looks at the places in Carmarthenshire he knew when he was young. The community has been destroyed, the young have left to find work, the farms are covered with forestry plantations. And it has all been not for the building of a better society but for the concentration of power, for the cultural degradation of people for profit, and for the perpetuation of militarism:

*They have planted the saplings for the third war
On the lands of Esgair Ceir and the fields of
Tir-bach
Near Rhydcymerau.*

The poem "Graves" illustrates his combination of traditional form and contemporary protest. There are some famous old Welsh triads which ask where the various Arthurian heroes are buried. He imitates their form to evoke first the lives of his grandfathers buried at Llansawel in rural Carmarthenshire; then the graves of his father and brother and mother, and the graves of two jolly drinkers in Alltwen in the industrial Swansea Valley. If the poem finished here it would be personally touching and evocative in the way Thomas Hardy's best poems are. But in the last verse he generalises, and asks about another grave:

*And the grave beneath the gorse
Shows where our language was lost
Our fine civilisation forced.*

But Gwenallt was not a poet of resignation, and his fighting spirit is better illustrated by a later poem in which he retells the story of a meeting between Henry II of England and an old man from Pencader. The king asks what hope there can be for the Welsh against his large army. It would be easy to wipe this nation off the map of the world. Not all your power, says the old man, could conquer this country were it not for your allies within: treachery and disunity and job-seeking (this line is as contemporary as ever it was). The weaknesses of my country drive me quite out of my mind, says the old man, but only the anger of God on top of our petty angers can destroy the nation:

*And he will raise up a small band of people
Who will lead us through these critical times;
It is they who will answer at the day of doom
For this corner of the world.*

NOTES & TOPICS

Did Nobody Teach You?

On Stevie Smith

THE VIVACIOUS NARRATOR of *Novel on Yellow Paper*, who claims to have written a long poem entitled "La Fille de Minos et de Pasiphaë", declares a constitutional preference for Racine over Shakespeare. A French preference, obviously, and the reasons she gives are French (the admirer of Shakespeare will present much the same account as grounds for his admiration): Shakespeare's verse is "conventional" whereas the feeling is "so warm and so human and so disturbing", and for Pompey Casmilus this is an antithesis which makes her feel "distraught and ill at ease." Then there are too many complications in Shakespeare's plots, too many inessentials, too many (if beautiful) distractions. "The plot of a tragedy must be bone-straight and simple." Pompey has strong opinions about a number of serious matters, and distinct feelings (she is not unfeeling at all), but she does not like a riot of emotion: "I do not like it at all." Thus she is at home with *Phèdre* because "Racine is very serene, very severe, very austere and simple. . . . And this tragedy is also very bracing . . . very strong and very inevitable and impersonal."

These adjectives, or some of them, could be applied to Stevie Smith's own poetry. Severe, austere, simple, bracing, impersonal. If "this is truly Greek, and what the Greek is," then Stevie Smith is somewhat Greek. If to be classical is not to be (in a number of

senses of that peculiar adjective) romantic, then she is in some senses classical. Like these adjectives, she is equivocal, not half as simple as she seems. For instance, there is a sparsity of great expectations in her outlook, or so it would appear. The Frog Prince is "fairly happy in a frog's doom":

*I have been a frog now
For a hundred years
And in all this time
I have not shed many tears. . . .*

Why change? To have the heavenly time which the story promises once the princess has kissed him, he must free himself from his contentment, for perhaps it is part of the spell "to make much of being a frog," and open himself to disenchantment:

*Come, then, royal girl and royal times,
Come quickly,
I can be happy until you come
But I cannot be heavenly,
Only disenchanted people
Can be heavenly.*

The poem is not simple and straightforward, after all, because of that ambiguous word *heavenly*, which is both flapper-talk and terribly eschatological (or something else very serious), and here, it seems, modulates from one sense into the other, so that finally it is the "romance" of living under a spell, in a frog's paradise as it were, that is to be exposed, not the romance which the fairy story holds out as the palace-living princess-loving future. Finally, to stand a chance of being "heavenly", you must be a man, undeluded.

If in the upshot this poem doesn't have much to say one way or the other about great expectations, it is an apt illustration of something else: that (as no doubt in Racine and in the Greeks) "bone-straight and simple" doesn't necessarily mean shallow or obvious, and while you can usually dart through Miss Smith's poems with immediate enjoyment, some of them are deep and (though they make no overt demand in this direction) deserve and repay considerable thought. Among such substantial pieces are "I had a dream . . .", "The Last Turn of the Screw", "The Airy Christ", "Come on, Come back", and "The Crown of Gold."

STEVIE SMITH died in London on 7 March at the age of 68. A new edition of her poems will be published by Longmans early next year. "*Novel on Yellow Paper*" (1936) was recently re-issued by Cape.

IF CLASSICISM IS avoidance of the romantic, then one can adduce her best-known because most obvious attributes: the perverse off-rhyming (she goes out of her way to rhyme

impurely, but at other times thumps down on the most obvious if pure rhyme), the inevitably comic and deflatory effect of rhyming English words with French, and the bathos which W. McGonagall achieved effortlessly but she had to work for. Thus "Saffron" concludes on an inept rhyme, which reins in the reader abruptly, *and* with an austere negative way-of-putting-it:

*Bice, Pale and Saffron but I love best
Beautiful summer Saffron, running fast.*

*Because this beautiful spirit should not be
frozen
And is furthest from it when she is Saffron.*

Lest "Hymn to the Seal", in its celebration of "God's creatures in their prime", should wax too grandiose, the middle stanza runs thus:

*When thou wast young thy coat
Was pale with spots upon it,
But now in single black it lies
And thou, Seal, liest on it.*

"The Small Lady" with her large washing machine, victim of a malicious witch, is shown as remonstrating in this way:

*"Aroint thee, false witch!" cried the lady with a
brave face,
"Human inventions help properly, magic is a
disgrace."*

A good sentiment, surely, but somewhat reductively expressed. The philosophical dialogue between Eve and the Virgin Mary is left to continue, but the report on the proceedings terminates on a strong note of definitive inconclusiveness:

*And they talked until nightfall,
But the difference between them was radical.*

And in what is surely a very serious poem, "A Man I am", with the reminiscence of Blake often remarked on in her work and a rather more pronounced flavour of the 17th century (particularly Herbert and Vaughan), the resonant lines

*But presently the spring broke in
Upon the pastures of my sin*

are followed by the deliberately flat

My poor heart bled like anything,

and in turn this is succeeded by

*And falling ill, I soon grew worse.
Until at last I cried on Him,
Before whom angel faces dim,
To take the burden of my sin
And break my head beneath his wing.*

Stevie Smith's Christianity—she described herself as an agnostic Anglican, and she seems to me to have known a lot about Christianity,



what it was, or what it could be—was no Phantom Spiritual State, no theological preserve or Sunday subject, but very much part and parcel of everyday life. Perhaps the sensed kinship with George Herbert resides here.

"UNROMANTIC" too are her reservations on the subject of Love. Or Love as it is generally written about. "Anger's Freeing Power" tells of a raven who fancies himself a captive in a cell which has only three walls. The loving narrator cannot persuade the bird that in fact he is free to fly away, but then two other ravens come along and jeer at him in a nicely vulgar manner:

*You wretched bird, conceited lump
You well deserve to pine and thump.*

This treatment works wonders: "Oh do I then? he says," and off he flies to heaven's skies. The narrator is left to muse ruefully:

*Yet when I woke my eyes were wet
To think Love had not freed my pet
Anger it was that won him hence
As only Anger taught him sense
Often my tears fall in a shower
Because of Anger's freeing power.*

Here she is close to Blake, that unromantic romantic and angel-seeing realist: "Damn braces. Bless relaxes", and "The tygers of wrath are wiser than the horses of instruction." Her Christ, too, is more tiger than lamb—"He is Noble, he is not Mild."

While part of her is in sympathy with dreamers, for to dream is human, part of her remains cool, sceptical and admonitory, and sometimes with an effect of what Derwent May has called "comic, forthright, moral knockabout":

*I'm sorry to say my dear wife is a dreamer,
And as she dreams she gets paler and leaner.
"Then be off to your Dream, with his fly-away
hat,
I'll stay with the girls who are happy and fat."*

"Accidie poisons the soul stream," as Pompey reminds us. Life has to go on, despite dreams and dreamers, and if the dreamer can be shaken into sense, then he or she should be. We observe how the poet passes with relief from "Dear Female Heart":

*Dear Female Heart, I am sorry for you,
You must suffer, that is all that you can do.
But if you like, in common with the rest of the
human race,
You may also look most absurd with a miserable
face—*

to "Alfred the Great":

*Honour and magnify this man of men
Who keeps a wife and seven children on £2 10
Paid weekly in an envelope
And yet he never has abandoned hope.*

Miss Smith could be grim. The woman chatting harmlessly on the omnibus in "Northumberland House", it transpires, is on her way to a lunatic asylum: the poet characteristically employs the old non-euphemism. And the gentleman uttering pious sentiments over a grave—

*Farewell for ever, well for ever fare,
The soul whose body lies beneath this stone!—*

is revealed as the murderer:

*My hand brought Filmer Smith to this strait
bed—
Well, fare his soul well, fear not I the dead.*

She can be grim—but she won't stand for any nonsense about abandoning hope. That would be ignoble. In what look like steps in a campaign against received "enlightened" opinion, she shows something of the terrifying honesty which Eliot ascribed to Blake. On one plane she seeks to rescue and rehabilitate the word "pretty." On another plane, the poem which begins

*A mother slew her unborn babe
In a day of recent date
Because she did not wish him to be born in a
world
Of murder and war and hate
"Oh why should I bear a babe from my womb
To be broke in pieces by a hydrogen bomb?"*

takes an unexpected, heterodox turn: we are not invited to sympathise with the mother and her "tragic dilemma", but rather the opposite:

*I say this woman deserves little pity
That she was a fool and a murderess
Is a child's destiny to be contained by a mind
That signals only a lady in distress?*

*And why should human infancy be so superior
As to be too good to be born in this world?
Did she think it was an angel or a baa-lamb
That lay in her belly furled?*

At the very end there is, perhaps, another turn:

*How foolish this poor mother to suppose
Her act told us aught that was not murderous
(As, item, That the arrogance of a half-baked
mind
Breeds murder; makes us all unkind.)*

Makes us all unkind—including the poet herself.

No, Miss Smith was not notably trusting. She didn't altogether trust the Muse. The Muse deserts you because you have complained that she doesn't speak loudly enough—and you hear her howling and muttering behind the door. Then you search for her by night and day, and you cry upon the Lord to give her back to you:

*He did repent. I have her now again
Howling much worse, and oh the door is open.*

The poet may be happy, healthy, in himself, but his poetry can be unhappy, distressing himself and others:

*My heart leaps up with streams of joy,
My lips tell of drouth:
Why should my heart be full of joy
And not my mouth?*

*I fear the Word, to speak or write it down,
I fear all that is brought to birth and born:
This fear has turned my joy into a frown.¹*

Not very trusting, but she was never cynical. And not hard so much as brisk, and especially brisk in situations which require briskness and a touch of bracing tartness. For all the dip-piness, she was a moralist firm in degree and central in kind, and a moralist in the best sense, for she felt while she judged. The engaging combination of overt sternness with underlying gentleness is shiningly present in "Valuable" ("after reading two paragraphs in a newspaper"), which I quote in full:

*All these illegitimate babies . . .
Oh girls, girls,
Silly little cheap things,
Why do you not put some value on yourselves,
Learn to say, No?
Did nobody teach you?
Nobody teaches anybody to say No nowadays,
People should teach people to say No.*

*Oh poor panther,
Oh you poor black animal,
At large for a few moments in a school for
young children in Paris,
Now in your cage again,
How your great eyes bulge with bewilderment,
There is something there that accuses us,
In your angry and innocent eyes,
Something that says:
I am too valuable to be kept in a cage.*

*Oh these illegitimate babies!
Oh girls, girls,
Silly little valuable things,
You should have said, No, I am valuable,
And again, It is because I am valuable
I say, No.
Nobody teaches anybody they are valuable
nowadays.*

*Girls, you are valuable,
And you, Panther, you are valuable,
But the girls say: I shall be alone
If I say "I am valuable" and other people do
not say it of me,
I shall be alone, there is no comfort there.
No, it is not comforting but it is valuable,
And if everybody says it in the end
It will be comforting. And for the panther too,
If everybody says he is valuable
It will be comforting for him.*

Miss Smith wanted happiness to exist where it possibly could. Indeed, she would have liked to see Phèdre happily married to Hippolytus: "I think it might have been a go. . . ." But life, she knows, is a struggle, no matter what you might think you would like it to be instead:

*Ceux qui luttent ce sont ceux qui vivent.
And down here they luttent a very great deal
indeed.
But if life be the desideratum, why grieve, ils
vivent.*

And though she has asked—more precisely, "a little wind sneaking along that was older than all and infamously strong" has asked—"Will Man ever face fact and not feel flat?", in practice man is often seen to rise superior to his myths. Even to the cruel story of Eve:

*. . . there is this to be said still:
Life would be over long ago
If men and women had not loved each other
Naturally, naturally,
Forgetting their mythology
They would have died of it else
Long ago, long ago,
And all would be emptiness now
And silence.*

Man sometimes does contrive to face fact and not fall flat on his face, even to live not without honour, so that on balance

*It is his virtue needs explaining,
Not his failing.*

*Away, melancholy,
Away with it, let it go.*

AS FOR ECCENTRICITY and quaintness, Miss Smith's themes are commonly the large ones, central to the human condition. Extremely interesting, and sufficient to dispose of any suggestion of her being a "naïf", are her reflections on death and suicide. The possibility, or the availability, of suicide is a great strengthener, Pompey muses; every child should be told, "Things may easily become more than I choose to bear"—

*that "choose" is a grand old burn-your-boats
phrase that will put beef into the little one, and
you see if it doesn't bring him to a ripe old age.
If he doesn't in the end go off natural I shall be
surprised. . . . See what it's done for me. I'm
twice the girl I was that lay crying and waiting
for death to come at that convalescent home.
No, when I sat up and said : Death has got to
come if I call him, I never called him, and
never have.*

And so, in the terms of one simple little verse, you look at the bottle of aspirin when you feel mournful, you reflect that two hundred will free you from anxiety—but you don't do more than look. Death you should think of as a friend: though you can call upon a friend, you should not impose upon him—and more-over Death is also a "great prince." Miss Smith valued propriety and decorum. The argument is by no means unsubtle. On the one side,

¹ "The Word", *The Observer*, 14 March 1971.

*a time may come when a poet or any person
 Having a long life behind him, pleasure and
 sorrow,
 But feeble now and expensive to his country
 And on the point of no longer being able to
 make a decision
 May fancy Life comes to him with love and
 says:
 We are friends enough now for me to give you
 death;
 Then he may commit suicide, then
 He may go.*

On the other side (as in "Mr Over"), it may be a devil's voice that cries, "Happy Happy the dead," for God says this:

*In man is my life, and in man is my death,
 He is my hazard, my pride and my breath,
 I sought him, I wrought him, I pant on his
 worth,
 In him I experience indeterminate growth.*

*Oh Man, Man, of all my animals dearest,
 Do not come till I call, though thou weariest
 first.*

Neville Braybrooke recalls Stevie Smith having said to him towards the end of her life: "People think because I never married, I know nothing about the emotions. When I am dead you must put them right. I loved my aunt." One could not for long suspect her of such ignorance. She was no *cenobite*—to use one of Pompey's favourite names for unfavourite things: "two diseases we have right here that the modern world is suffering from—*dictators* like I said and *cenobites* like I said too . . ." In a short poem called "Man is a Spirit" she points out snappishly that, even so, the spirit-guest oughtn't to wrinkle up his nose at the flesh-host who serves him well when the wind blows. And obviously she agrees with Ormerod when he maintains that he can have knowledge of God both before life and after death, but that here in temporal life, and only in temporal life, is permitted "A place where man might impinge upon man, And be subject to a thousand and one idiotic distractions"—

*I knew, and shall know again, the name of
 God, closer than close;
 But now I know a stranger thing,
 That never can I study too closely, for never
 will it come again—
 Distractions and the human crowd.*

There is a time and a place for everything. Ripeness is all, ripeness of time and rightness of place.

IN ITS ESSENCE Stevie Smith's poetry is uncluttered, and hence must leave out, for instance, the reservations and modifications

and clarifications which a denser and slower-moving writing admits. But it leaves out what it could not accommodate and still be the kind of poetry it is: and that is all it leaves out.

A reader may well prefer other kinds of poetry, of course, but he cannot make out that her poetry is one of those other kinds which has somehow "gone wrong." When it succeeds, it obeys its own laws, and they are not unduly restrictive. At moments she is like a lot of other poets—I would add Hardy, de la Mare, Ogden Nash, Edward Lear, the creators of ballads, of hymns, of nursery rhymes, to those already noted—but finally, in the totality of her work, she is simply like herself. At the worst her poems are rather dull, and one asks "So what?": that is the way of failing of her kind of poetry. I think she fails surprisingly rarely, especially if we read the poems in bulk, when among themselves they provide their own qualifications and refine their arguments.

To say this is to remind oneself that a part of her best work, at all events her most *own*, hasn't been touched on here. And simply because there seems to be nothing to say about it: children are likely to enjoy it unworringly, it engages adults and yet leaves them baffled and a little uneasy. It is not amenable to interpretation or conducive to moralising. And one thinks of Pompey's sharp remarks on clever talk about books and pictures and how "you want to keep very mum-o, and you want to keep the smarties off, oh yes they can read now, and very cunning they are the way they pick things up, very quick and cunning, much fiercer about it they are . . ." Perhaps it is appropriate to end with one such poem, "Voices about the Princess Anemone":

*Underneath the tangled tree
 Lies the pale Anemone.*

*She was the first who ever wrote
 The word of fear, and tied it round her throat.*

*She ran into the forest wild
 And there she lay and never smiled.*

*Sighing, Oh my word of fear
 You shall be my only dear.*

*They said she was a princess lost
 To an inheritance beyond all cost.*

*She feared too much they said, but she says,
 No,
 My wealth is a golden reflection in the stream
 below.*

*She bends her head, her hands dip in the
 water
 Fear is a band of gold on the King's daughter.*

D. J. Enright

The Romantic Counter-Revolution of Our Time

Letter from Germany—By JOACHIM FEST

THE WORLD-WIDE PROTEST movement has used up several generations of actors in only a few years. Again and again puzzling new trends have attracted attention and got themselves talked about for a fleeting moment and then as rapidly faded away. A turmoil as colourful and centreless as an old battle painting made the scene difficult to make out. The same applies to the accompanying rhetoric. It helped itself more or less indiscriminately from the arsenal of the ideologies, and altered, mixed, and parodied these. Protest was not seldom the accomplice of these distortions.

The question is whether there is a common factor underlying all these various manifestations; whether more than a chance contemporaneity connects the early Mods and Rockers and the revolutionaries of yesterday, the taste for gaudy pearl necklaces, Indian intuitive techniques and "Lady Mary Jane." Various attempts have been made to explain the whole phenomenon. Writers in Germany—not unlike other analysts—have ascribed it to the universal Conflict of Generations, to Alienation, to Oedipal rebellion against a paternalist society, or to the rediscovery of elemental Utopian needs in a world of rational technical priorities.

Behind all the names, slogans, and emotional states, however, there lies an unmistakable romantic rejection of reality, a violent revulsion from the cool, technical rationality of the present age. The connecting link between the cosmopolitan groups that gather round an exotic figure to practise meditation and from time to time to utter the magic syllable *om*, and the Berlin Tupamaros as well as the American pilgrims to Woodstock, is their great refusal of the world of asphalt and

computers. Reality being so horrible, the answer to it is a great exodus in search of "three days of music, love and peace."

In spite of all its political and social draperies, the Protest movement in all its forms has always been self-preoccupied and, regarded as a whole, has never quite transformed its anger into effective social energy. During a theoretical discussion of the Berlin SDS in June 1966 Dieter Kunzelmann delivered himself of a much-quoted outburst. "Stop all this blather," he exclaimed. "All I'm interested in is my own orgasmic difficulties" Not the least of the reasons why he was loudly denounced for this by his comrades was that it revealed the unmistakable asocial trend present even in the revolutionary cadres.

The common characteristic of all these heterogeneous groups was that their most important problem was themselves. Their real search was for a kind of individual felicity, not for a better society for all. The striking disproportion between the tactical brilliance of the Protest movement and its flagrant inability to define its aims was the result of this; for its members derived their real satisfaction, not from the realisation of a revolutionary idea, but from the specific operation on which they were engaged. "Those who missed Paris in May know nothing of the fire of life," the French writer Fabre-Luce said, looking back to the events of 1968. That was what it was all about—the fire of life, *feu de joie*, *Lebensglut*, individual stimulus. It was, taken together, an outburst of collective narcissism.

THIS GENERATION'S DENIAL of reality is most tangibly expressed in drug-taking. It is significant that drugs are not taken in a spirit of intellectual adventure; the interest does not, as is frequently claimed, lie in experiments in the expansion of consciousness, but in the very opposite, the temporary extinction of consciousness, involvement in group excursions into artificial paradises in pursuit of "gods without shoes or shirts." The term "drop-out" reveals the broken-down condition, the

JOACHIM FEST is a young German historian, author of "The Faces of the Third Reich" (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1970), currently engaged in the writing of a new biography of Adolf Hitler. He lives in Hamburg, and edits the "Essay" department for "Der Spiegel."

melancholy disgust with life, that underlies all the bold gestures.

The inability to tolerate the present extends to the unpleasure of the idea of changing it. The philosophers' ideal city is only invoked; it is not really sought for, or constructed. Ernst Bloch, the German Marxist philosopher who had such high hopes for the rebels, overlooked the factor that differentiated them from him; the fact that they had no aim, no Utopia, but only a deep desperation from which they sought to escape. In all previous generations Utopianism was one of the most striking characteristics of protest groups. The rejection of it by this generation is not least due to the fact that its attitude to the future is essentially and inherently pessimistic; it can "only be spectrally imagined", as a spokesman of the German *SDS* put it. The turbulent crowd turns its back on it, and thus articulates itself with looking back to the past. In other words this is nothing but a great romantic counter-revolution.

IT IS ONLY THE LATEST FORM taken by counter-revolutionary rejection of the modern world. There is no difficulty in showing that impulses and themes are at work that have for generations been part of the permanent stock-in-trade of the intellectual attitude towards reality: contempt of civilisation, the wish for direct, unimpeded human relations, for the innocence of the simple life and for intuitiveness and, above all, fear of the de-romanticisation and dehumanisation of the world.

The celebrated student speech made by Mario Savio on the steps of the University of California on 2 December 1964 that started the American storm was nothing but the declaration of war of a radicalism based on despair of civilisation; he told the 6000 assembled students to fling their bodies into the machines that made them sick. Similarly, in Germany, Bernd Rabehl wanted to destroy technology root and branch, and Rudi Dutschke, with the traditional anti-urban effect of the anti-Enlightenment, wanted to "tear the cities to pieces" (*die Städte auseinanderreißen*); while Timothy Leary wanted to hide technology behind thick belts of trees, in front of which buffaloes were to graze and automobiles would be forbidden. Children of Rousseau as they were, they looked to a transfigured past for their model of a worth-while future. Herbert Marcuse, who embodied the alienated intellectual not without suggestive effect, has spoken obscurely and beatifically of a "return to an imaginary *temps perdu* in the real life of humanity."

Because it concealed itself behind a left-wing, progressive façade, the counter-revolutionary trend of the protest movement as a whole was not, however, immediately evident. As the *Zeitgeist* required, the denial of reason took place in reason's name. A Frankfurt publisher who cultivates progressive attitudes last autumn published Edgar Rice Burroughs's *Tarzan*, those potboilers of a turgid romanticism. Nevertheless, it was all in the interests of enlightenment. There is an Arabic proverb that says that there are some people who call their lice gazelles.

The point I am making is supported by the rhapsodic irrationality of the language of protest, the movement's surrender to an anaesthetising, mind-throttling music, its eccentric clothing and faecal language, its stylisation at an infantile level. One of the slogans on the wall at the Free University of Berlin in the summer of 1968 was *Buch macht dumm* ("books are stupefying"). Another was *Studium ist opium* ("study is opium").

Thus the youthful resistance movement is closer to Gobineau, Lagarde, Moeller van den Bruck, and also to Jakob Burckhardt or Nietzsche, than to Marx or Lenin; and it has (as Walter Laqueur has demonstrated) more in common with the *Wandervögel* and the German *Jugendbewegung* of the 1920s (which was absorbed, not involuntarily, into the Hitler Youth) than with Rosa Luxemburg. These are young people of the Right who happen to be on the Left—though they have not yet realised this about themselves. They have not yet discovered their (in a phrase which Ernst Jünger's work once popularised) revolutionary conservatism.

This necessarily raises the question of the relationship of the protest movement to Fascism. The movement itself in all its ramifications regards Fascism as its most extreme opposite, its enemy *par excellence*, and it is impossible to doubt the subjective genuineness of this hostility. Professor Jürgen Habermas's observations about "Left Fascism" in this context were, quite properly, immediately withdrawn, for they were concerned with the more superficial aspect of the use of street violence.

Nevertheless, at a deeper level a close basic kinship exists. For Fascism as a historical phenomenon was part of the romantic counter-revolution characteristic of the age, and it is the continuation of the latter that we are witnessing in San Francisco, Berlin, or Woodstock; Fascism was its most radical, powerful and desperate manifestation. The ideological material that it found at hand and worked up into its own philosophy of life included practi-

cally the whole 19th-century heritage of despair about civilisation, and this hostility to the contemporary world was not the least of the factors that gave it resonance and brought it its following. Through all its cold visions of technological domination there gleamed nostalgia for the ancestral world of thatched farmhouses, village greens, children's round dances, and happiness under the lime trees (*das Glück unter den Linden*).

To the contemporary consciousness these visions are obviously unforgettable. As a result of their adoption by Fascism some of them have, of course, been discredited; but the impulse behind them is as strong as ever. That is why the counter-revolutionary protest movement of our time searches for them in the unspoilt idyll of South America or South-east Asia. The healthy, pre-industrial agrarian world is contrasted with unromantic urban civilisation. Castro has taken the place once occupied by our own Jörg von Frundsberg, and recourse is had to Che Guevara or Ho Chi-Minh in an attempt to remove rejection of civilisation based on despair of it from a disagreeable proximity to Fascism, where it has its place psychologically and in the history of ideas.

IT WOULD CERTAINLY BE WRONG to dismiss the members of the protest movement as "Fascists" or to argue that the movement as a whole was a contemporary version of Fascism; and only the most blatant polemical intentions could mislead anyone into claiming that certain incidental parallels between the two constituted identities, such as the irresponsible dynamism, the remarkable combination of feminine and brutal traits, the individual instances of belief in violence which, of course, is to be found not only among the swastika-wearing bands in the United States and in Great Britain but also, for instance, impelled the leading SDS ideologue at the time to adopt "Madagascar" solutions, as when he suggested that "older persons and certain criminals" whom it was too late to re-educate should be forced to emigrate. What can be maintained, however, is the continuity of period and the similarity of consciousness.

On the occasion of his withdrawal of the remark that I quoted above, Jürgen Habermas spoke of the "crude misunderstanding" that lay in equating the SDS with the German student movement of the Nazi 'thirties. Externally this may be true enough. The hunger for order and authority, the uniform militancy, of the older generation is no longer present; the

contemporary generation is more resigned, more elegiac, more suspicious of claims to authority. But common to both are pessimistic disbelief in reason and total rejection of the existing order. Gregor Strasser's lapidary remark that Nazism meant *das Gegenteil von dem was heute ist* ("the opposite to what exists at present") has something in common with Marcuse's statement that the existing order "as a whole is always bad." Both are characterised by this ideology of consistent negation, which goes hand in hand with a remarkable inability to formulate proposals for an alternative order. Does not the tendency common to both regard politics as a spectacle, a "happening", point to deeper links? The historian Klemens von Klemperer has remarked that it was characteristic of Fascism to offer no Utopias, but only illusory euphorias. But perhaps this is characteristic of the social expectations of a whole period that pessimistically would rather forget about its future than construct it.

Only those who fail to see these deeper connections can be surprised at Hans Magnus Enzensberger's complaint about the lack of *Führern*, of leaders (whom with precious evasiveness he calls "guides" or "pilots"), or be upset at rediscovering the old German model of the *Volksgemeinschaft* in the undifferentiated, egalitarian, emotionally united society "in which everyone cares about everyone else." For this generation's political commitment is, above all, the attempt to overcome individual isolation by group experience and to dissolve individual life in the warmth of the group. These can, if you like, be called "Fascist" trends, though who would have supposed that on the whole they would look so benign?

THEN AS NOW, both spokesmen and rank-and-file were of a noticeably unpolitical type. This is shown by the way in which hundreds of thousands of them as the result of some external stimulus suddenly switch to a "political" behaviour pattern, only to revert soon afterwards to their characteristic apathy. Mick Jagger, the leader of the Rolling Stones, who declared himself to a surprised interviewer to be a Marxist, made the significant remark that he "wanted nothing but to turn people on. . . ." This is the quasi-political ideology of the Berlin *Sportpalast*.

For behind it there lies the belief in the unchangeability of social conditions that is so close to the belief in destiny, the *Schicksalsglaube* of Fascist ideologies. "You are what you are," Mick Jagger proclaimed, and what is it but a statement that is the product of a strictly conservative spirit. Similarly, Janis

Joplin (just before her death at 27) said that "we beatniks just know that nothing will get any better. . . ."

Except for some, however. It is not without significance that many of the prominent leaders, when they leave the demos, the pop-barricades, and the magic gardens, prefer to escape into the dream world of show business or high fashion and exchange one pseudo-reality for another. Prominent Dutch *provos* have retired into the film business; Rainer Langhans has withdrawn into the Munich rag trade; Beatle John Lennon wants only "to end up as an eccentric millionaire"; and Daniel Cohn-Bendit early on betrayed his weakness for the grand bourgeois villas of the Rhineland (as well as starlets of *Cinecitta*.)

Such phenomena are of psychological rather than polemical interest. They testify to the corrupting pressure of a consciousness that can tolerate only illusory worlds and can derive satisfaction only from a system of surrogates. In an issue of his journal *Kursbuch* Hans Magnus Enzensberger has used the ramifications of capital ownership in the Federal Republic as the basis for a game of dice; the instructions state that after every throw the squares occupied, each of which represents a West-German industrial or com-

mercial concern, "are lined in red, as a sign that the concern in question has been liberated and put under workers' control. . . . The game is called Expropriation (*Enteignung*)."¹ A better name for it would be *Ersatz* activity.

THE SUSTAINED, UNSWERVING TRADITION of denying reality reveals the enormous difficulties involved in the process of adaptation to the contemporary world. It also demonstrates, however, that certain social contradictions continue unchanged. Only a minority consciously accepts them as a challenge. Arnold Toynbee has spoken of humanity's "permanent nostalgia" for the ancestral world. It was never more powerful, and has given the whole period the characteristic features of romantic self-defence. This connecting link is unmistakable.

The leaders of the Protest movement in all its varieties are all convinced that they are the defenders of human autonomy, and they claim to be undermining the authoritarian potential. The question, however, is whether it is not they who constitute precisely that potential. Historical experience inclines one to scepticism, for it tends to confirm the theory that everything romantic works in the service of other, very unromantic forces.

Radio Till Now

Between Culture and Kitsch — By JOHN WAIN

WE are supposed to be living in an epoch in which television has supplanted radio. Yet as long as radio exists at all, the take-over can never be quite complete. It is impossible to feel the same respect for the younger medium.

Radio, after all, has glorious things in its history. Not only has it pioneered many important developments in education—both in the narrower and the wider sense of that term—but it has an heroic dimension. Brave men, hiding in barns and attics, have defied tyranny by means of radio. Its equipment is cheap, portable, and easy to hide; that of television is complex, heavy, and costly. The Gestapo in

occupied Europe were effectively hindered and baited by means of radio, and if the miniature transistor set had been invented in those days the resistance might well have been even more formidable. Television will never come to the aid of freedom in this way. A pirate television set is an impossibility; its whereabouts would be spotted before the equipment was half set up. Again, radio can work *for* the law as well as, if necessary, against it. As an infant medium, only a few months off the drawing-board, it showed that it meant business by securing the arrest of Crippen on board an Atlantic liner.

By comparison, television has nothing to

show except the closed-circuit scanning of department stores. It belongs, irredeemably, to the world of merchandise. That is why commercial television seemed a natural, if depressing, development; whereas a commercial radio network, such as we are about to have slung round our necks by Mr Christopher Chataway and his accomplices, seems the debasement of something noble, like those circus acts in which lions jump through paper hoops.

If radio is murdered, it will be an inside job. The medium will be overshadowed by television, but never eclipsed altogether, so long as radio "to itself do rest but true." In England, what this boils down to is that the sound-broadcasting side of the BBC must be no further humiliated and pestered by the forces of trivialisation and commercialisation, either within the Corporation or on the floor of the House of Commons. For as long as any of us can remember, the BBC has given us the best sound-radio service in the world, and though the dismantling has already gone very far, we must, as a nation, firmly insist that it shall go no further.

ONE OF THE MOST ACTIVE contributors to radio, during the golden years of its ascendancy, was D. G. Bridson.¹ In thirty-five working years he produced, or wrote, or originated in one way or another over eight hundred broadcasts, many of which were acknowledged classics of radio. An early effort of his, *The March of the '45*, a sound-panorama of the Jacobite Rising, became one of the BBC's favourite show-case exhibits; for years it was studied by all producers attending the BBC Staff Training School—which meant, since these people came from many countries and often returned home after training, that its influence was world-wide. Mr. Bridson's particular combination of gifts was well suited to make him a pioneer in this kind of programme: an accomplished writer of verse of the immediate, speakable kind, he had a strong historical imagination and a grasp of large effects which could be blocked out in sound. In the case of *The March of the '45*, he seems to have been fortunate in his Scotch collaborators:

... undoubtedly the impact of the programme on listeners was mainly due to the inspired production of the Scottish cast by Gordon Gildard. Only when the story moved south of the border did Harding and I take up the

thread with the march from Carlisle down to Derby. The final third of the show, from Falkirk to Culloden, was Gildard's responsibility again. I have had many exciting moments in radio but few so strangely exciting as my first hearing of what he had done with the verse. As declaimed by the Scottish narrators, Douglas Allen and Rex de la Haye, it came down the line from Glasgow like a highland river in spate. This was radio with all the stops out—crowds, fights, orchestra, choir and gunfire, adding their quota to the effect.

"Radio with all the stops out", crowds, pipes, orchestra, gunfire—this one feels, is where Mr Bridson's heart lay and still lies. (The same zest comes into his narrative where he describes the experience of recording the Zulu Royal Dance at Eshowe.) He is a natural Features man, at home in the territory where imaginative writing mingles with journalism and documentary.

I do not mean to enforce a hampering distinction here: it is not my opinion that art, any more than science, ought to observe a rigid boundary between Pure and Applied; nevertheless, it is a fact that in art, as in science, there will be no first-rate Applied unless there is some first-rate Pure to nourish it and keep it up to standard. One's cavil against Bridson is that he is too much an Applied man; strong in those skills that strikingly project a point of view or sketch a social scene, much weaker in everything that concerns the purer reaches of art. The literary asides in this book show a commonplace taste and an acceptance of superficial reputations which would, I think, have prevented Bridson from doing really memorable work as a pure writer, within radio or without it. His real gift was for the bold, provocative statement that opened people's ears and eyes. In the 1930s, when the North of England was a vast shadow-area into which few members of the governing class had ever ventured, and which endured a great deal of quite unnecessary suffering merely because it was invisible from the Home Counties, Bridson did excellent work with such programmes as his "Harry Hopeful" series. His object then was to "project the North", an aim he was well qualified to achieve. One becomes more dubious when, thirty years later, one finds him still "projecting", still interested in causing a stir and waking people up. In his marathon series of twenty programmes, *America Since the Bomb*, Bridson prided himself on presenting a lively impression of American social unrest and political dissent, an impression that was not lost on the British young. He tells us, with a touch of complacency, that one of its constituent programmes, *Revolt on the Campus*,

¹ *Prospero and Ariel: the Rise and Fall of Radio. A Personal Recollection.* By D. G. BRIDSON. Gollancz, £3.00

included "a truly inspiring outburst by Norman Mailer", as if Mailer's predictable outbursts could still, at that time of day, inspire anybody. He gives us a roll-call of "the names that the series threw up as its heroes", including Kerouac, Ginsberg, Ferlinghetti, and others of the same well-shuffled pack of cards whose influence has gone so far to produce the flood of mediocrity in which the literary scene is currently awash. To be blunt, Bridson's acceptance of all this over-excited *kitsch* was much too uncritical, and when he congratulates himself on being so closely in touch with Youth, one begins almost to associate him with all the other middle-aged misleaders who have served young people so shabbily in the last ten years.

With its portrayal of student unrest, social non-conformism, anti-war demonstrations and political militancy, *America since the Bomb* gave a strong foretaste of British unrest in the years that followed it, the later 'sixties. And I was glad to feel that even as I approached the 'sixties myself, I could still mount radio exciting to the younger audience. The correspondence that I have from the series, and the steady requests for scripts from the universities, persuaded me that I had done so.

Perhaps one day it will become clear that the people who served the student generation most honestly, during the troubled period which began about 1965 and still continues, were those who prevailed on it to slow down long enough to think for a moment, rather than rush out into the streets and start screaming and throwing things, however "exciting to the younger audience" such eruptions might be.

I SAY THESE DISTASTEFUL THINGS not to knock down Bridson—if he is not equally perceptive over the whole range of his activities, not equally on his guard against all forms of self-deception, which of us is?—but to indicate that the limitations of his vision have their effect on the picture he gives us of radio, of its history up till now, and of its future. He sub-titles his book "A Personal Recollection", but even with this candid disclaimer it is hard for the reader to keep constantly in view the fact that he is writing most of the time not about radio in general but about the radio Feature. If one sits back and thinks about everything that British radio achieved, the great wealth and diversity it brought to us, between 1930 and 1950, and then turns back to Bridson's pages, it becomes apparent that not only much, but *most*, of that wealth finds no mention there. The whole gigantic effort, an effort largely successful, to spread a taste

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for good music, when Sir Walford Davies, Master of the King's Music, showed himself to be the first and finest of a long line of gifted popularisers; the radiance of those variety shows, all the way from "Band-Wagon," through "Itma" to the Goons; the political drama that was acted out over the loudspeakers throughout the 1930s and '40s, when radio was the world's most important medium for oratory (if the radio-borne yells of Hitler gave the '30s their dimension of nightmare, the bulldog-growl of Churchill likewise flavoured the war years). Mr Bridson's book has a lengthy index, but an index at least equally long could be made up of names that became nationally famous through radio, from Tommy Handley to Spike Hughes, from C. E. M. Joad to C. S. Lewis, for which one looks in vain.

Mr Bridson's theme is "the rise and fall of radio", and the point I am trying to make is that if he had not been so whole-heartedly a Features man, the fall might not have seemed so complete. To him, when Features Department was axed and its large and shining galaxy of writers and producers dispersed, it must have seemed like the end of the road for radio. Yet surely if radio is to resist being gobbled up by television, it must work for

survival in those areas where it is strongest and most valuable. And the feature programme is the wrong ground to fight over, if only because it is exactly the kind of programme which television can do as well or better.

I speak of radio's being "gobbled up" by television, and my definition of such gobbling would be the taking-over by TV of *all* radio's functions, whether or not it can do them better. When people switch on TV to get the news, or to hear music, or any and every time they want to hear a story told or a song sung, then TV has won, but it is a hollow victory because it involves being burdened with so much material that is not suitable for the screen at all, with the accompanying frustration and waste of resources.

At the moment, radio in England is far better than TV in its news coverage; programmes like "The World at One," "Ten o'Clock," "News Desk" are better than their equivalents on the screen, while the invaluable "From Our Own Correspondent" on Saturday mornings has the depth and thoughtfulness that used to be characteristic of a paper like *The Times* in its great days. The "music programme", with its non-stop presentation of a very wide range of good music, supplies another need; Mr Bridson despises it because it means hiving off the listeners who want real music on to a separate wavelength, leaving the populace to be permanently peppered with pullulating pop. "It has merely made doubly sure", he writes, "that none but the already converted will ever hear good music again." But surely this attitude is a hang-over from the days when the BBC saw itself as the great coxer, the nanny with the medicine on a lump of sugar, slipping the Beethoven in between the banalities. I am certain that this was the right policy thirty years ago, when the whole machinery of culture-diffusion was in the Spinning Jenny stage, and there were millions of people who would never have known what a symphony orchestra sounded like if they had not had it trickled into their ears unawares. But presumably that strategy, if successful, was bound to become obsolete; it was designed to work towards a state of affairs beyond itself, and I think it has done so.

Mr Bridson also dislikes "Radio 3"—the music station—because he associates it with the assassination of the Third Programme. But my impression is that, here, a stealthy but successful rear-guard action has been fought. After about eight o'clock at night, the rule compelling Radio 3 to put out nothing but

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Edited by Michael Browne
Foreword by Max Hayward

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music, or talk about music, is evidently in abeyance, and a good deal of Third Programme material is broadcast every evening.

RADIO DRAMA is also a strongly continuing form, and in Mr Bridson's silence on that topic—a neglect so striking that it seems almost wilful—I wonder if we are not in the presence of some last remnant of an ancient rivalry between Features and Drama. The whole question of the radio play is, in any case, one that could do with a good airing. (The play on words is unintentional, but let it stand.)

Radio drama is an excellent form. It sets an interesting challenge to the writer, the producer, and the actor; while, to the listener, it allows the blessing of being able to use his own imagination instead of having everything relentlessly imagined *for* him. There is a general principle here. Those arts which leave the recipient's imagination something to complete, instead of making him a passive consumer, are better than those which present him with a totally finished and packaged product. *E.g.*, the novel is better than the film; within the sphere of film, the silent cinema was better than the talkies; the radio play is better than the TV play; stylised marionettes are better than waxworks.

To the writer, and to anyone interested in the arts of language, the radio play has a particular importance because it is a verbal medium. The modern writer so often finds himself seduced away from his desk, taking part in activities which are essentially corporate, in which those things he has uniquely to offer are not likely to be of much use. Both film and television use writers, but they use them as ideas men. The most justly celebrated writer, when he enters a film studio, finds himself rated fairly low down in the organisation: a little above the studio carpenter, perhaps, but a long way below the chief cameraman and the lighting specialist. This may be good for him if what he needs is to be taken down a peg, but I cannot help feeling that in the world as it is today what most writers need is to be moved up a few pegs. There cannot have been any age in which the arts of language, the pure gift of

narration and evocation *in words*, have been so little regarded. Hundreds of thousands of students are taken on guided tours through "lit." by a large corps of well-paid instructors, but the said instructors do not seem to have much success in revealing to the young the depth and power, the mystery and beauty, of language, and the arts of language. As soon as they are released from their studies, they turn back like sun-flowers towards the glare of the lighted and animated image.

In this situation, the radio play can make a great contribution. It can keep alive the concept of language as an independent medium—liberated from print, yes, but not having to pay the price that film and TV exact for that liberation. The BBC, or some individuals within the BBC, appear to me to have grasped this very well. In recent years, radio has presented important new work by such writers as Beckett and Pinter; and run-of-the-mill radio drama, the soil in which the masterpieces can take root, continues to go out week by week.

AS I WRITE, a film production of *Under Milk Wood* is in full swing. Because the very perfection of *Under Milk Wood* as a radio play makes it unsuitable for any other medium, the adaptor has gone over it with a mental crowbar, finding places where he can force it open and inject material taken from elsewhere in Dylan Thomas's writings. This urge to smash perfection and reassemble the pieces in some grotesquely crippled form seems to be a purely twentieth-century phenomenon. Instead of making a film *ab ovo*, reflecting the same vision of life as *Under Milk Wood*, if that is what's wanted, this team has to take a perfect radio play and butcher it. I hope the BBC will mount a production of the play in its true and original form, and put it out in the same week that the film has its *première*. Actors of the stature of Hugh Griffith are available, and there are still some producers who know how to get the best out of a brilliant cast round the microphone. I do not believe that sound drama is dead—but even if it were, I don't see why we should have to endure the spectacle of its corpse being dragged at the heels of the film industry.

BOOKS & WRITERS

Genius or Nothing

A View of Norman Mailer — By WILFRID SHEED

PEOPLE who have written about Norman Mailer tend to feel that once is enough. Especially around New York, the Cult of Personality is so dense that you usually wind up with armfuls of cloud. Mailer himself has talked about the Public Self that obscures his daily self from view. But the Public Self follows him home and climbs into his books and obscures his literary self too, and the result is that he just doesn't get written about the way other writers do.

Having reviewed him three times myself, and having come up with three different answers, I had decided to give the whole thing up. But recently I was asked to do a piece for a German magazine, far off the Mailer beat, and it seemed like a chance to get him straight. For once, one wouldn't feel that one was either abetting a promotion machine, or flinging oneself in front of it.

Norman Mailer's use of the word "existentialist" has become by now something of a running joke, or owlish put-on. Since he has coupled it with every conceivable school of noun, it is impossible to tell precisely what he means by it. But if it has something to do with making yourself up as you go along, then it may be the right word for him after all.

Until recently, I had supposed that the one link between his various identities was the wish to be a genius in each. "Genius or nothing" has been his proposition—the greatest whatever, novelist, playwright, moviemaker of his generation, nation, universe (depending on his *afflatus* that day): not simply the most talented, although he uses the word a lot, but something beyond talent. In his acting roles, he has used the names Pope and King; but transparently, the one he was groping for shyly was God.

But then I saw him campaigning in East Harlem for the Mayor of New York, and I was forced to reconsider. Here he was humbly

shaking hands with bar-flies and street Arabs who patently hadn't heard of him, solemnly introducing the wife, and playing the hack politician without winks or flourishes. For once, he was settling for much less than genius: settling for simple competence and accuracy of impersonation. The new existential Mailer had thrown off his last link with his old selves. In the course of his self-creation, he was even willing to be commonplace. (In a Nixon year, it was possibly the only game left.)

THESE CHANGES are not capricious. To survive in the American limelight, it is advisable to change your act not once but often. And Mailer understands the American limelight as well as anybody alive (with the possible exception of Allen Ginsberg, who crawled alone from the wreckage of the Beat Generation). Before he became a writer, Mailer considered going into advertising; as, of course, he did. *Advertisements for Myself* is not just a cute title, but a statement of what Mailer believes the writing trade to be all about. When his friend Norman Podhoretz wrote a clumsy piece of self-promotion called *Making It*, Mailer came roaring to its defence. He is, among other things, as loyal as a Mafia chief; and he was not going to desert a disciple just because the latter had botched an assignment.

It is thus no great accusation of Mailer to say that he has caught every fashion at its crest. He has never, to the best of my knowledge, denied it. Rolling with the times is part of what being a genius is all about. American writers are especially prone to think of themselves as spokesmen for their generations, so that the line between prophet and journalist is a blurry one at all times.

Thus it is no accident that Mailer wrote the first big war novel, subsequently managed to hook himself on to both the Beat Generation and the French Existentialists, jumped off in

time to catch the Negro express, elbowed briefly to the front of the Peace Movement, worked Viet Nam into the title of a novel (an almost infallible sign of charlatantry) and caught up with the movie fad, all in no time at all. And who is the first writer to tell us about the moon? This is just an abridged survey. In between he wrote a play, which he considered the most exciting theatrical event since World War II; then, having established his genius one more time, he left the form behind. Who goes to plays anyway?

An opportunist? Of course. Prove to him that there's anything wrong with that. In personal style, he is the greatest of the businessmen-adventurer writers. I have seen him pull out a wad of notes to bet on some trifle, then plunge the notes into a wine glass to prove his ascendancy over money. Mailer is not a primitive in this respect, but a conscious follower of tradition. His old crony, Seymour Krim, recently accused him of introducing crassness and success-worship into American letters. But in fact, Scott Fitzgerald could have written the same about Hemingway, and Edith Wharton could have written the same about Scott Fitzgerald. Here as elsewhere, Mailer is not always the innovator he appears.

IT SEEMS on balance priggish to resent Mailer, the celebrity. He has been a good conscientious one, always providing the best copy he can, and putting on a spirited show even when he can't feel much like it. He is notably patient and courteous with most strangers most of the time. Carpers are disarmed by his excellent manners and his evident eagerness to be liked. If you are a writer yourself, you may find yourself being joshed and flattered into Mailer's army. He understands that you want to be a genius too, and shows every consideration.

Hence, everything written about him in the New York area tends to be either sycophantic or disproportionately surly. It goes without saying that he is resented by writers who won't or can't exploit their personalities as artfully and unflaggingly as he does. Yet he has made it better to be a writer in America; he has made the career seem exciting at a time when it threatens to sink from sight. If one must have a celebrity culture, let us by all means stuff some literary men into it.

The question for us is not why Mailer keeps shedding his skin, but whether it has been good for him. In terms of artistic production, his career is a disappointment so enormous

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that it almost begins to look impressive. He had the makings of a first-rate naturalistic novelist, but veered from that, either because it was too easy, or because the jig was up with naturalistic novels; and he has not lingered long enough in any other form to master it. When he does do something outstanding now, as in parts of *Armies of the Night*, it will usually be found to be in the old naturalistic mode. His descriptions of persons and places are demoniacally acute. But he gains no help from the forms themselves. His movies are just like his speeches, his play was just like his novels; the necessity of being a genius flattens them all out indiscriminately.

Mailer rejects, like Lucifer, the principle that to be great you must first be good. In his famous novel, *The Naked and the Dead*, he did try simply to be better than his rivals, to win within the rules. But he has not allowed that to happen lately. He has produced work

for which words like "good" or "bad" are simply irrelevant. Mailer has some intelligent ideas about art, yet artistically his later work is slapdash and even amateurish. His novel, *An American Dream*, is gawky and improvised; his play, *The Deer Park*, hard-breathing and stilted. Submission to form requires some minimal self-effacement, and Mailer can see no point in writing if not to advertise. It is inconceivable that he would ever write something anonymously—or write a single page without announcing his presence. Naturalistic novels were too anonymous and he dropped them. Good movies are anonymous too, so he makes bad ones. Good actors are anonymous, so he comes on as a ham. "Greatness," as Orson Welles has shown, can actually war with goodness; genius can obliterate talent.

IT WAS NOT always so. Mailer has written a harrowing account of a nervous semi-collapse

London

DID MR NORMAN MAILER still want to write the great American novel which would *Change the Consciousness of our Time*? He said he had used that phrase back in 1959; and then he launched into a tale of Babe Ruth. He said every American child had been brought up on this story. In 1930 or 1932 the Babe was playing in a ball game and the pitcher brushed him (nearly hit him with the ball) and then the Babe looked slowly round the crowd of 60,000, chose a point on the fence, pointed slowly at it, and hit the next pitch for a home run over that fence.

So was Mailer pointing the finger? "It was in 1959. Not now. Sorry. The quotes get less good as the years go on."

In the evening, after a party at the Ritz in suite 411, Mailer turns up at the Round House to see the first showing in England of his own film "Maidstone," and then to discuss it and answer questions about it from the audience. This is the purpose of his visit to England. Outside the Round House there are brawls to get in, at 10s each. Hundreds do not get in. Mailer is bigger box office than Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton were at the same place a few days before.

The film is directed by Mailer, made with Mailer's money, has Mailer on screen for a good part of the two hours running time, and is, says Mailer, the most significant thing he ever did, more important than any novel. It is about a maker of pornographic films, played by Mailer, running for president of the United States. It is a film about the making of this film. It is difficult to follow. Mailer says the meaning will be clearer after you have seen it ten times, and thinks this may be the first film

that people will want to see ten times.

The discussion, in a way, was a second-hand extension of the interview I had done [Terry Coleman writes] because I was chairman and had to field questions from the audience to put to Mailer. You'd think that with such a film, made in such a fashionably incoherent way, Mailer would have been on the side of the angels, but not a bit of it. It soon became obvious that come the glorious Maoist-Anarchist revolution, Mailer's head will be among the first to fall in the cause of love and personal freedom and the sanctity of life. Wild, wild Norman Mailer had, it is true, made the mistake of turning up in a pinstripe suit made in Saville Row, and a Brigade of Guards tie, but this would have been difficult to recognise under the lights.

The questions were mostly inaudible, illiterate, abusive, and not questions at all. The questioners will no doubt be proud to be recognised as illiterate: "verbal" and "linear" (meaning apparently rational or sequential) are their cant words of disapproval.

They have so far incapacitated themselves from using words that they no longer know that a question is something that ends with a question mark. They made long speeches. In an hour, not one witty or pointed question. It appeared to be a fair question to tell Mr Mailer, in a long rigmarole, that his work was excrement.

In the face of all this he was sweet reason itself. To use a metaphor from a ball game, which Mr Mailer will instantly recognise, he carried his bat after a captain's innings, but only because his opponents, after taking 50 yard run-ups, consistently bowled wides.

THE GUARDIAN

around the time when he was finishing *The Deer Park*, his third published novel, and that would seem as likely a turning point as any. Having tasted fame with *The Naked and the Dead*, he had flopped comparatively with the more experimental *The Barbary Shore*; and it now looked as if his new book mightn't get published at all. He was learning a lesson familiar to Americans and perhaps to others: that simply being a good writer isn't enough.

No one gives up fame without a struggle, least of all a man whose favourite metaphor is his fists. His first reaction was to divide the non-stop showing-off, which celebrity seems to require, from his serious work. He wrote the pieces which later made up *Advertisements for Myself*—rampant ego displays to keep the public alert while he worked on the big novel. But the strain proved too much. The energy kept flowing into the advertisements and would not go into the sustained work. Until, to produce any sustained work at all, he had to include the advertisements in it. And even this must be done quickly. His writing became, and remains, hasty and manic.

To justify this transfer of energy, he resolved at least to be an interesting subject. And he succeeded. The advertisements got

better, and so did the product. His feats of introspection began to treat wider and wider sectors of experience. His strategy was to become the subject he wanted to write about—a cop, a politician, a burned-out romantic—and then simply to write about himself. Without taking his eye off Mailer for a minute, he became a first-rate reporter.

THIS IMAGINATIVE PROJECTION requires colossal nervous exertion. And Mailer seldom cheats. He may be a chameleon, but he is a sincere one. He really *does* turn into those things. To do so, he surrenders trappings of Self that other writers cling to; although he talks about himself relentlessly, he is quiet about his origins, his parents, his childhood, anything that would nail his ego down to specifics and keep it from reincarnating. He has passed the ultimate test of sincerity. Lots of bright well-behaved boys have toyed with romantic insanity, but Mailer actually got there. It cannot have been easy for a mathematics prodigy and “nice little Jewish boy from Brooklyn” to turn into an authentic wild man, but he did it—up to a point. That is, he takes turns being crazy and being sane.

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The sane Mailer directs him toward the hot subject matter—whether it be a Peace March, a political convention, or the drug scene. He makes an intelligent survey of what's happening: Professor Mailer is one of our shrewdest, most level-headed analysts. Then at some point, he allows the devil to take over, to find the things that only a devil can find. Sometimes he descends into gibberish. Sometimes he finds nothing, and fakes it. But madness, edited by intelligence, pays off often enough. Whether dealing with yuppies or small-town Republicans, Mailer follows the Chestertonian principle of exploring the psychosis proper to the group, the identifying madness, and letting it enter him, like an exorcist opening himself to a devil. (I bring up Chesterton not just to startle, but because I find some bizarre affinities between these two dazzling, slovenly mystics.)

Rhythm, grace, courage play a part in this process, and he exalts these qualities at length. But ultimate accuracy depends on how well his head is working at the moment. Intelligence, in fact, leads the list of both his assets and of his liabilities. Because he is so clearly intelligent, people pay close heed to his gibberish. A wild man who is also smart is the kind of wild man for us. If he can (and he does just often enough) write some of the best book criticism around, then his stuff about cancer and bowel movements can't be as silly as it sounds. Professor Mailer earns credit to pay for self-made-wildman Mailer's spreeds.

These latter can be nerve-racking affairs, facetious, badly written, a compulsive pouring of brain on to page. Yet he turns them finally to some sort of account. His plastic and cancer demonology is full of illuminating metaphors. I have discussed these elsewhere in terms of L.S.D. and the drugged consciousness, the sense of magic powers residing in objects, which obliges one to make moral distinctions between, say, telephones and air conditioners. The Jewish moralist in Mailer follows him everywhere, even into sleep and hallucination. (Otherwise, the only effect of his Jewishness is his determination not to be typed by it.)

MAILER has made much of his association with marijuana and booze. But his hallucinatory intuition that everything must be watched carefully brings to mind another period in Mailer's life—his days as an infantryman in World War II. His fear of plastics and bad buildings is of a piece with his alertness to personal threat. Environment *as such* is menacing, like a South Pacific jungle, where

trees move, and insects, mud, Japs form a single enemy. His rightly famous powers of observation have a firm base of suspicion. And when they go wrong (as when he sees *Mafiosi* glaring at him in Chicago restaurants), it is like a war veteran's fever, turning mosquitoes into dive bombers.

His intelligence hurts when it takes the form of facetious ingenuity. Mailer lunges at a lot of cute theories, bowling over facts and contradictions on the way. During his mayoralty campaign he wrote an essay, full of trumped-up indignation, blaming the general hostility in New York entirely on air pollution. This was interesting, except that, as every New Yorker knows, the town was hostile long before air pollution had been heard of. This was not a trivial slip; it meant that he hadn't thought out the nature of the city, but had stopped at the first catchy explanation he came to.

This leaves a lot of other times, and a prophet should not be scored on his mistakes. *Armies of the Night* is full of blinding hits and misses. But it tells a good novelist's lode about the relation of town and country, new and old in America. On this subject, Mailer is close to pitch-perfect. Ever since, or perhaps even before, he joined the army and found out what it meant to be an urban Jewish boy in a redneck barracks, he has been uncannily alert to social style, and the reasons for it. Mailer the brawler, Mailer the club fighter, is his personal response. But when he describes the enemy, the marshals and assorted goons, it is still with an edge of fear that makes them live. Otherwise, his paranoia is for entertainment now, not use. Outside of the odd burst of rage, he is a startlingly kind man.

Mailer's latest, *A Fire on the Moon*, leaves the future in suspense, which is perhaps where he wants it. The book is a spin-off of one of those Papa-esque magazine projects on a big, big subject, and Norman earns his cheque with some truly big noises: distending his rhetoric to old Time-Life Cosmic (a style only a literary man would attempt these days). He is, of course, an Aquarian, the Sign of Journalism, and as gaseous as the Milky Way about it; but he is also an old engineering student with some nice small things to say about rockets and such. Since then, he has been silent, toning down the publicity machine to a soft echo, and one hopes he will at last give his inner-space probes time to get somewhere, and not keep rushing out with interim reports. The public will not go away: and the good advertiser should have the confidence to lay low and keep them waiting a while. Silence, exile and cunning are, as the Big Talent and

absolutely top genius Mr Joyce demonstrated, not bad for business in the long run.

WHAT DOES THE existential future hold for him? Who knows? With his vitality, he could make the return to Art, which is barred to most who leave it. He has formidable equipment, though not limitless. Humour is outside his range, is in fact basically inimical to his drastic thrusting temperament. But his simple outrageousness gets laughs (as William Buckley's does) and this may mislead him. In his movies particularly, he resorts to comedy to get him out of artistic corners: a windy blustering comedy, consonant with greatness, but an evasion all the same. If Mailer's fierce competitiveness damps down with middle age, and he sticks to what he does best, his masterworks may lie ahead.

His gravest handicap is that his worst moments are often his most genius-y, and he sometimes seems to cultivate them for just that reason, though the critic in him must know better. His foolishness can seem, at

times, too calculated, a sane man trying his damndest to be crazy. (Everybody knows that geniuses are crazy, don't they?) In my darker moments, I sometimes wonder whether Mailer is crazy at all. His clipped speech and watchful eyes suggest that the frenzy may be the fruit of calculation. But even if so, he has been true to its demands, has laid the pressure of occasional madness on his brain and has got some fine writing moments out of it, as well as some passing bad ones.

If he just forgets about masterworks and sticks to the rather special art of direct self-promotion, his future will still be interesting. Because he gives himself unstintingly, opening his lungs to experience with a romantic willingness that comes close to being noble. Also, from our less exalted point of view, a weather vane with that kind of accuracy is something to prize. Watch Mailer: if he turns to contemplation, buy a prayer mat; if he stays with politics, expect huge voter turnouts. As Mailer goes, so goes the nation. That is the form his genius takes.

The Function of History

And the Failings of Historians — By J. H. PLUMB

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO neither a European historian nor a Chinese Mandarin would have thought it difficult to answer the question as to what the function of history should be. Both would have answered, unhesitatingly, that its purpose was social and moral. For the Mandarin the examples of the past demonstrated the wisdom, the fundamental truth of the five principles of Confucius: as moral government was the highest aim of the Chinese state it is not surprising that that most admired of histories was called *A Comprehensive Mirror for Aid in Government*, a title bestowed upon it by the admiring Emperor for whose edification it was partly written.

The function of history in early 19th-century Europe and America differed very little from the Chinese. Its purpose was educative, and hopefully moral—and even if few historians would express themselves as crudely as Voltaire (abolish the study of history “and you will probably see a new Saint Bartholomew; en-

courage it and may be a new Henri IV will sit on the throne of France”) the implication of their lucubrations on history's purpose and destiny was that it did teach and should teach. But what it should teach and who should be taught were already gritty problems and the subject of lively debate, and one to which almost every distinguished historian of the nineteenth century contributed.

The Chinese Mandarins had no such problems: the way history should be written and what it should contain had been defined over a thousand years previously in the shape of the *Dynastic Annals*—a huge bureaucratic enterprise. Although far more accurate and comprehensive than anything Europe achieved before the 18th century, they were strictly formalised—very terse and very arid. True there were, from dynasty to dynasty, changes and improvements, better criticism of sources, a preoccupation with the precise meaning of terms in ancient times, which recalls the efforts of

European philologists in Renaissance times.¹ But the form as well as the purpose of Chinese history was as rigid and as stable as Chinese society itself. And when this system broke down under the influence of Europe in the nineteenth century, it created intellectual chaos in China. Chinese society was deprived of a useable past, and the attempt to create a new one on Western models—Marxist, Liberal, or National—confounded confusion.

In Europe history was developing rapidly and divergently, partly moulded by nationalist ideologies and partly following its own growing intellectual consciousness and needs. The vast archival floods of the nineteenth century helped in the first instance to flesh the age-old framework of nationalist history and make it much more accurate. But there was always a great deal of unease about history's purpose, as may be seen from Fritz Stern's admirable anthology *The Varieties of History*.² Pre-occupied as Thierry, Michelet, Ranke and even Macaulay were with the nature and purpose of history, it remained either narrative or biographical. And it was largely so to remain for the rest of the century in spite of Marx's and Engels' demonstration of the power of historical method in social analysis. They had very little influence on the historical profession in the writing of history before the twentieth century, indeed until after the Russian Revolution.

By that time, however, the preoccupation of historians had begun to change. The great narratives had begun to give way, both to detailed monographic studies and to the analysis of concepts. Such technical methods had been present in historical studies for some time, but they were mainly the concern of legal historians. The ultimate triumph of the ambitious historian had been to write great narrative histories, whether it be Freeman attempting a huge history of the Norman Conquest or Samuel Rawson Gardiner devoting his life to a history of the English Civil War. But by the end of the century, however, a conceptual and analytical approach to great and specific problems had begun to pre-occupy the giants of the profession. An excellent example is the

great constellation of first-class scholars who were pre-occupied with the nature and origins of feudalism and the effect of the Norman Conquest—Seeböhm, Round, Vinogradoff, and Maitland. Furthermore, the impact of both archival riches and the natural sciences had encouraged this development. Exactitude and truth seemed more likely to be achieved on subjects narrowly defined. The multitudinous documentation now available for almost all periods of recorded history also commended specialisation. These developments were almost universal in the West. At this time, too, it was Frederick Jackson Turner and his concept of the frontier which created the most intellectual excitement in American historical circles. Intellectual admiration had begun to move away from the literary historians, with their vast and colourful tapestries of heroes and battles woven against a background of impressionistic social and economic history, to the historical analyst.³ The growth of social sciences—particularly economics—speeded the process. And now it is hardly possible for a serious professional scholar to contemplate a large-scale multi-volume narrative history. At the most he might commit himself to a synthesis of a century or less for teaching purposes.

HOWEVER, THE GREATEST stimulus to this development has been neither the impact of other disciplines nor the internal development of history, but the growth of the profession itself. For most of the nineteenth century history in schools was ancient history. Modern history as a university discipline did not emerge at Oxford and Cambridge until the 1870s, largely in response to the fact that a paper on the History of England had been included in the Civil Service Examination inaugurated in 1870. At first growth was very slow, the students comparatively few, and the outlook of the teachers of history very much akin to that of the Chinese Mandarinate—their avowed purpose was to fortify moral standards and strengthen judgment, indeed to help to produce a highly principled bureaucracy. The change over the last century has been truly revolutionary and the growth in historians comparable to the growth in natural scientists. Almost certainly there are more historians alive today than the total of those who have previously existed, including the East as well as the West.

The extent and nature of this academic industry may be judged by Arthur Marwick's

¹ See P. Demiéville, "Chang Hsüeh Ch'eng and his Historiography" as well as E. G. Pulleyblank "Chinese Historical Criticism" in *Historians of China and Japan* (ed. W. G. Breasley and E. G. Pulleyblank, 1961).

² *The Varieties of History*. By FRITZ STERN. Macmillan, £2.50; paper 75p.

³ For example, the majority of the History Faculty at Cambridge were always somewhat disdainful of G. M. Trevelyan and regarded him as an amateur.

The Nature of History,⁴ which, after a rapid sketch of history's history, settles down to describe the present-day diversity. Here can be found the structural fragmentation of the subject into political, constitutional, ecclesiastical, economic, intellectual, scientific, demographic history, etc., etc., and the horizontal fragmentation, for every known region of the world, from Vladivostok to Wigston Magna, has its own small band of scholars. Further segmentation has been caused by the chronological guillotine that chops subjects into small fractions of time. A decade becomes extravagantly ambitious; the whole work of an outstanding creative thinker as a field of study unnerves the average professional. The impression one obtains from Marwick's book is of bewilderment: a growing nagging fear becomes more insistent—can this vast professional activity be of any service, except for itself and its practitioners?

The same impression is created by G. R. Elton's *Modern Historians on British History 1485-1945: A Critical Bibliography*,⁵ a rapid and brief summary but at times oddly inaccurate account (for so good a scholar) of work done on British history during the last thirty-five years. There seems altogether too much of it. And even more persistent is the growing conviction that few, very few, historians are now concerned with major questions. A growth of specialisation in time and place that becomes smaller almost every year: literally thousands of historians scurrying like ants over the debris of time, but often possessing no more than an ant's vision. Is it any wonder that the teaching of history at school should be reeling blindly from novelty to novelty—hopefully searching for a theme, a style, a subject matter which will hold the imagination of the young and excite their intellectual appetite? Add to this the scintillating, but deceptive, allure of ancillary techniques from other disciplines—sociology, economics, anthropology, psychology etc.—which creates a further complexity and more areas of relativity and doubt. And it is not surprising that, amongst those whose primary concern is to educate rather than pursue research, the debate about the purpose and function of history has become as obsessive as in the Inaugural lectures of recently appointed professors. The trouble is, of course, that the great structural certainties about the past upon which so much

⁴ *The Nature of History*. By ARTHUR MARWICK. Macmillan, £2.50; paper 75p.

⁵ *Modern Historians on British History 1485-1945: A Critical Bibliography*. By G. R. ELTON. Methuen, £2.75.

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of the teaching of history was based are fractured and crumbling.

IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY, school history and university history developed from a tolerably settled vision of the past, created in the previous three centuries. The British ruling class looked back on their past, back to the Conquest and beyond with pride and pleasure—they sensed a process of growth and development, (legal, constitutional, economic and imperial) enshrined in battles and conflicts. Foreign powers were viewed largely in relation to Britain itself. European history was also seen in terms of a developing pattern from the Dark Ages to the conflicts of nationalism of the early twentieth century: or alternatively from the triumphs of the Renaissance to those of modern science, and so pointed to the epic of progress. Of course there were a few strident and discordant voices, but in general what has all too loosely been called the Whig Interpretation of History not only held sway but also made sense to both masters and pupils who belonged to the world of authority which it depicted. A surprising number could identify with a general here, an admiral there. And for those who could not, this was the history of the promised land of power which they hoped to enter.

As soon as the floodgates of education were truly opened, the history of this oligarchy made less and less sense: Kings, Queens, battles, the conflicts of nobles and monarchs could not catch the imagination—at least so teachers increasingly felt—of the sons and daughters of mechanics and commercial travellers, to whom this view of England was a paste-board pageantry that did not in any way impinge on their lives. But what to teach? Should history become relevant to modern social and political problems? The decline of British power had made other countries loom like very substantial ghosts out of the past. Should American, Russian or even Chinese history be taught to young Britons? As most of the taught would finish in industry and not in the Empire, would it not be most sensible to teach primarily social and economic history, with a good dollop of the history of technology thrown in? And, of course, history was increasingly the prey of new "relevant" subjects. Ought history to be but one part of social studies? Should there be a "new history" like a "new maths", based on projects? And there was Black history, World history, Local history. Could a child really derive anything from history—more than a mind-stretching process that could be equally well done by half a dozen other subjects? And so why bother?

ALL THESE QUESTIONS AND MORE will be found discussed in *New Movements in the Study and Teaching of History*.⁶ The fascinating aspect of this book is that no one adopts the view that history has any direct lessons to teach. It can expand the mind, stimulate the imagination, create sympathy for human beings, tease and stretch the intelligence: above all it may help us to understand that there have been societies totally different from our own. But no one, it seems, believes that there is a coherent vision of the past which ought to be taught to the young. Indeed, only Arnold Toynbee, in a short but perceptive piece, stresses that historians have played and can play a vital social role.

Such an attitude is increasingly unfashionable either at the universities or in the schools, where fragmentation is both more admired and easier to teach. One has only to turn over the collected history papers for "A" level or for honours degrees in any English-speaking university to be deeply depressed by the incoherence and fragmentation into which history has fallen.

This is particularly marked in research and it leads more frequently than not to a distortion that can be exceptionally misleading. Hungering to be like natural scientists, historians have increasingly limited their areas of specialisation in the hope of totally dominating the source material available for them. A particular case in point is the work of Sir Lewis Namier. He reduced his area of interest firstly to the structure of the House of Commons in 1761, then to a series of investigations of some of the parliamentary political activities of 1761-5, and finally to a bibliographical and constituency dictionary of the House of Commons from 1754-1782. In these fields he possessed an unrivalled mastery of the sources; his intelligence was exceptionally acute and he wrote, if not with grace or elegance, at least with a crushing authority. His interpretation was accepted, not only for the precise years upon which he worked, but for the whole century. But he himself left out a great deal of the politics of his own years. He refused to consider the public debate about politics in the early 1760s. He largely ignored the House of Lords and concerned himself not at all with the day-to-day business of government—the private bills which absorbed so much time, yet created so much satisfaction for those who ran the political nation. Although Namier demonstrated the power of factions and connections,

⁶ *New Movements in the Study and Teaching of History*. Ed. MARTIN BALLARD. Maurice Temple Smith, £1.90.

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he, by his very self-limitation, distorted the picture of the politics of his age. Furthermore, politics, I would stress, cannot be studied over a handful of years. If they are, the results will always mislead. Ideas and issues rose and fell in 18th-century politics, but they usually lasted more than five years. Their influence could seem small over a year, but over the decades it was often immense. Again, some of the most significant political developments of the English parliamentary history can only be seen in terms of many generations—for example, the rise of the electorate in the 17th century, its contraction and erosion in the middle decades of the 18th, followed by its recovered authority from 1784 onwards, could never be discerned from the study of one or two general elections.

Similarly, political propaganda—its growth, its diffusion, its shibboleths, and symbols—cannot be understood in the context of a year or a parliament: to make sense of it one needs a hundred years at least. Unfortunately aspiring political historians stay away from such large themes, for they would be regarded in the profession as too ambitious and so they take an ever more circumscribed topic and so miss the formative factors of so much of England's political experience.

Again, I would maintain that any discussion of the consequences of the fall of Rome needs to take at least a thousand years of history. A young historian adopting this theme as his field of study would be regarded by his fellow historians as a megalomaniac or a madman or both. Of course, there is a case for specialisation, both as a training for professional techniques and in providing a brick or a bit of straw for that rare and undervalued brood, the synthesising historian. But the emphasis on specialisation and the adulation of professional specialists has gone too far. Even historians concerned to be active merely within the profession need to ask both larger questions and questions with a more pertinent historical purpose than they do at present. A few historians of high quality are certainly doing this, but they are all too rare.

ALTHOUGH LARGER AND MORE DEEPLY searching questions might improve the quality of history, it will not re-assert its social value—quicken the historical imagination of children or deepen the historical consciousness of adults—in the way that the nationalist historians did in the nineteenth century or that doubtless Marxist historians do in Russia or China. Is it possible for historians in the West to present their dogged attempt to see the past as it really was and yet make history socially meaning-

ful? Does the former compel microscopic history and does the latter always mislead?

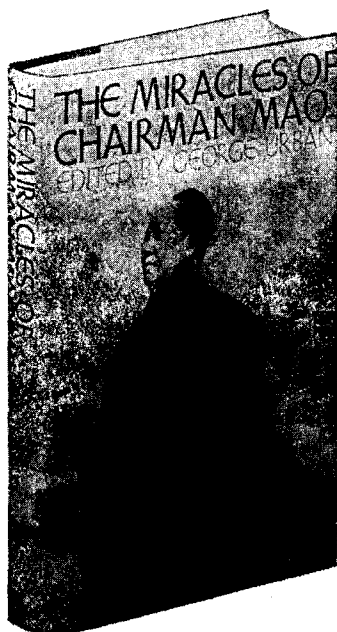
This, I am sure, is the problem which creates confusion in the teaching of history, but I am not at all sure that any solution is possible by historians unless a stronger and clearer need is expressed by society itself. Only if society acquires a sense that the dimensions of the past are deeply relevant to its own problems will a sense of power and authority return to historians themselves. If society is not responsive, historians are likely to retreat further into their own world, to their highly formalised and intellectual games. This to me seems a pity.

AND AT THIS POINT, of course, one has to make a personal asseveration—almost an act of faith. For me the present world has an ever-deepening need to be conscious of the process of time because it is witnessing the close of an epoch that began roughly ten thousand years ago: the end indeed of societies based primarily on agriculture and craftsmanship in which towns were rarely more than centres for the organisation and servicing of these activities, or of religion and government. Their inhabitants were always outnumbered by the weight of rural population. Of course, within these millennia societies differed greatly in complexity, in extent of power, in achievement and in sophistication. And yet there are basic similarities, whether we compare T'ang China with the France of Louis XIV or Peru of the Incas. In general the same social institutions are common to them all—family, organised religion, warrior castes, an élite of bureaucrats, more often than not a semi-divine authority. And between the literate societies there are many resonances in ideology; a symbolisation of natural forces that clearly links the rituals of the agrarian year or reflects the family structure: often this is combined with a religion of personal salvation and hope. Often the present is sanctified by an interpretation of the past. Men of authority possess the genealogies which confirm their power: and the history of their societies is theirs. There are many common factors in literature—the epic, the lyric poem, the romance, *etc.*—if seemingly less in music, painting and the decorative arts, but even here common expression of a common situation can be discerned.

Crude as these statements are, they indicate themes upon which a general interpretation of man's past could be based and one in which the varieties of human experience could be seen in a framework of common needs. And certainly it is history that takes horizons as wide as this that I feel ought to be taught in schools

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and universities, because it would also help to answer the problem of history's relevance.

This world of peasant, craftsman, merchant, priest and warrior began to crumble in the nineteenth century and collapse in the twentieth, so creating acute problems in the social institutions which were so appropriate for a less complex world—the family, organised religion, class structure, *etc.* All of our problems have very deep and highly historical roots—and the grave weakness of the intellectual activity of modern society, outside science and technology, is that the dimension of time is constantly ignored. Many ills which publicists lay at the doors of modern society are the result of the conflict between two almost incompatible methods of human organisation, one with long, long historical roots going back some ten thousand years, the other scarcely yet born.

EVEN IF DESIRABLE, and many of my colleagues would very much doubt it, a steady vision of the past and one which in basic training takes so large a compass as ten thousand years, is unlikely of achievement. Even in America the old Western Civilisation courses

are on the way out. They tended to be boringly chronological and boringly encyclopaedic, whereas what is needed is a course similar in intention, that is to impart a knowledge of mankind's history, but thematic, comparative, imaginative and exciting.

And yet if history remains locked in its microscopic, almost myopic vision, it will go the way of the classics. Already there are signs that its place both in schools and in universities is contracting sharply. In America admissions to history courses at Harvard and Yale were down by nearly 30 per cent last year. Some may welcome this and prefer a truly professional discipline, narrow, exact and, for those properly trained, illuminating.

To me, however, it would seem a pity that the dimension of time, the true historical consciousness, should be denied to those who need it most—the men and women of intelligence and education who run our world. The power of history, its position of authority within an intellectual system has, however, always derived from its capacity to explain the present and, perhaps, to indicate the future—two roles which, at present, professional history singularly fails to play.

Marshalling McLuhan

Dr Miller on the Fringe — By MARTIN ESSLIN

MARSHALL MCLUHAN certainly has succeeded in making himself an intellectual status symbol, a brand-name turned message. Surely only a tiny fraction of those who argue about McLuhan's supposed views about the mass media have ever read any of his books, let alone his important and basic *Gutenberg Galaxy* (1962). These superficial camp-followers of intellectual fashion, of course, misunderstood McLuhan, who is far from being a mere coiner of catch-phrases but a serious scholar of much learning. But so also, I am afraid, does Dr Jonathan Miller, the author of the booklet on McLuhan in the Fontana Modern Masters series,¹ though from the exactly opposite standpoint—not through superficiality but by misapplied pedantry.

Dr Miller's booklet is erudite, well researched, elegantly written, in short brilliant, except that it misses the point about McLuhan.

It is a neat demolition job expertly carried out, except that the contractors went to the wrong address and have destroyed the wrong building. McLuhan, who is an intellectual gadfly, a divine *provocateur*, a catalyst and stimulant, is treated as though he were an experimental psychologist and annihilated as such. It is as though the Ministry of Education were to remove Shakespeare from the curriculum because he placed Bohemia by the sea—for that obviously proves that he teaches the wrong geography and is therefore harmful to learning.

More than that: Dr Miller devotes a considerable proportion of his restricted space to an exploration of McLuhan's development from literary critic, and devoted Catholic and Canadian prairie agrarian with a nostalgia for the gentlemanly ideals of the old rural deep South, to his emergence as a prophet of the mass media. For this purpose he has read many of McLuhan's early writings and dug up some fascinating quotations, all designed to show that, far from being ultra-modern and

¹ *McLuhan*. By JONATHAN MILLER. Fontana Modern Masters. Collins, 30p.

"with-it", McLuhan's standpoint is indeed profoundly "reactionary"; and, by linking this reactionary stance with a sympathy for the Dixieland myth, Dr Miller clearly also implies that McLuhan must be a racist, or at least a sympathiser with a slave-holding society. In other words he damns him by association—without, so far as I can see, bringing the slightest scrap of evidence that a literary critic's admiration for Edgar Allan Poe, Allen Tate, or other Southern writers does indeed have any such implications. Nor, so it seems to me, has an admiration for Chesterton or agreement in some points with F. R. Leavis, the slightest relevance to McLuhan's views on the cultural implications of television or the lay-out of advertisements.

The strangest thing of all about this curious little book, however, is its starting point. Dr Miller opens the argument by quoting a passage from an interview McLuhan gave to G. E. Stearn² in which, asked whether he regarded the electronic mass media as a good or a bad thing, he replied that he wanted to avoid dragging such value judgments into the argument. Dr Miller sees this as a claim by McLuhan to "scientific objectivity" and

grandly demolishes this wrong-headed view of science by quoting Karl Popper's statement that science does, in fact, always start from a point of view, from a theory rather than from pure, value-free observation. Although McLuhan never claimed that it does, one cannot but agree with K. Popper and Dr Miller. Except that, from then on, McLuhan's writings are meticulously combed for mistakes of observational data and "demolished" as products of preconceived opinions, inherited "reactionary" standpoints, rather than as pure, value-free observation.

DOUBTLESS MANY OF THE POINTS of detail Dr Miller adduces are quite correct. Nobody who reads McLuhan can avoid finding innumerable statements which are not strictly verifiable, or are indeed patently untrue. I strongly suspect that McLuhan himself is well aware of this. In point of fact, the quotation from the interview from which Dr Miller starts out, and which dwelt on his readiness to withdraw any statement that proved without foundation, clearly suggests that he likes putting forward unverified ideas merely as a stimulus for further thought and research. McLuhan is not (this must be stressed and stressed again) a "scientist": he is an ideas-man, a stimulator of thought, a dialectician, a Demosthenes rather

² See G. E. Stearn, "Conversations with McLuhan." ENCOUNTER, June 1967.



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than an Aristotle; and he stimulates debate by overdramatising the issues.

This dialectical, dramatic method is as legitimate a type of discourse as any other—provided one realises which genre one is dealing with. If I may return to Shakespeare, his *Winter's Tale* conveys a number of important human truths by this method and nobody could impugn the intrinsic worth-whileness of these statements by pointing out that, say, the story is not particularly likely to have happened, or that the passions involved have been carried to over-dramatised extremes (quite apart from the error about the sea-coast of Bohemia). Well, McLuhan is no Shakespeare, and no poet. But take Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy* (or his *Zarathustra*), or Milton's *Areopagitica*, or Blake's prophetic books, or, for that matter, the writings of Freud and Jung. Here we are somewhat nearer to the intellectual area in which McLuhan operates.

Dr Miller makes a good deal about the falseness of any world-view based on a struggle between two extremes—in this case head and heart, linear logic and the rich mosaic of sensual perception. True: these extremes will hardly ever be found in a pure state in everyday reality. But to label models based on the construction of such extreme polarities "unscientific" overlooks the fact that differential and integral calculus, the very notions of zero and infinity, or innumerable experimental set-ups never encountered in nature, also operate with the artificial creation, or the unverifiable assumption, of such extreme polarities as methods by which one can isolate phenomena or start chains of reasoning.

McLuhan's main mistake, it seems to me, is that he assumes that his *style* of argument in itself is sufficient to indicate to informed readers the genre of his discourse; that it doesn't occur to him that some readers might take him so literally as really to think that an extreme formulation like "the medium is the message" is to be taken as an all-embracing truth rather than a provocative way of warning people against putting undue emphasis on the content of a broadcast while ignoring its unspoken implications. Having laboured for thirty years in one of the mass media myself, and having taken immense trouble with the content, I for one was by no means dismayed by McLuhan's drastic aphorism. Indeed, I was elated to find someone who confirmed my long-held suspicion that often the fact that something was broadcast at all, was more important than the actual formulation. Why has McLuhan been

so popular among the practitioners of the mass media and advertising? Miller's explanation is that they are flattered their lowly pursuits should be regarded as culturally respectable by a real, full-fledged, live professor. Nothing could be further from the truth. McLuhan's attitude (as Miller acknowledges in his argument about McLuhan's nostalgia for a pre-industrial past) is in fact one of extreme condemnation of the mass media. What could be a more devastating indictment of the broadcaster's earnest endeavours to produce an equivalent to poetry or logical discourse than the statement that the content is nothing, the medium itself being the message? No, McLuhan's popularity among workers in the mass media comes from the recognition that here, at last, is someone who is talking about the mass media in a way which is stimulating and clarifies many problems the practitioners involved daily encounter, not by pronouncing eternal truths about them but by opening up fruitful avenues of thought. For example: Miller very successfully demolishes McLuhan's classification of television as an audio-tactile rather than as a visual medium. I never took that classification particularly seriously. The fact remains that the small screen and its relatively low definition forces the television director to use the closest possible shots to get an impact; television, compared to the cinema (and indeed the theatre), pushes the spectator far *closer* to the screen than any other visual medium; so that, even if the explanation about the scanning-beam acting as a kind of finger deciphering a braille character, turns out to be far-fetched and even totally wrong, the intuition behind that attempt at explanation is amazingly fruitful (and true).

Similarly, Dr Miller is very probably right in his criticism of McLuhan's idea that the habit of reading lines of print in the age of the printed book induced a hypertrophy of the eye over the other senses. Yet he again seems to me to miss the point—which is that reading is a far more *abstract* occupation than, say, listening to a lecture by a speaker present in the room whose voice inflections, appearance, or physical presence might well put his thought in a different light. One of McLuhan's most telling observations about reading escapes Miller: namely, that it is a solitary, introverted occupation transporting the person who indulges it into an inner landscape. Here again, then, although some of the detailed argument may be wrong, the basic intuition about the nature of a civilisation based on print was profoundly right and useful.

HAVING "DEMOLISHED" McLuhan, Dr Miller, on the penultimate page, comes face to face with what he regards as a paradox:

I can still recall the intense excitement with which I first read McLuhan in 1960. Not that I remember a single observation which I now hold to be true, nor indeed a single theory which even begins to hold water. And yet, as a result of reading him, I first began to look at print as a thing in itself; I became aware of the peculiar idioms associated with using the telephone. I began to see photographs, not just as pictures of the world around, but as peculiar objects existing in their own right, often usurping the reality which they supposedly represented. The special idiom associated with radio became glaringly apparent; and as someone who has subsequently spent much time trying to devise and shape programmes for TV I am grateful for the way in which McLuhan alerted me to the odd properties of the medium itself. And yet I can rehabilitate no actual truth from what I read. Perhaps McLuhan has accomplished the greatest paradox of all, creating a possibility of truth by shocking us all with a gigantic system of lies.

This, in view of the beneficial effects of McLuhan on Dr Miller's intellectual and artistic development, is pretty ungenerous. Nor is it particularly scientific. Why should erroneous theories be called *lies*? Why should a hypothesis which has verifiably proved immensely

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productive, in the case of Dr Miller at least, be called "a gigantic system of lies"?

Surely here Dr Miller falls into McLuhan's own—venial—sin of overdramatisation. Was Aristotle a liar because his theories have now been largely disproved? Or Newton? Or Lamarck? Or Freud? Has not Dr Miller himself quoted Karl Popper about the need to start with a theory, the impossibility of being scientific without *a priori* notions which may well turn out to be wrong? Of course, McLuhan is not a scientist, nor does he claim to be one. In my view he is an intuitive thinker of great originality and insight, backed by a wealth of erudition. And—this is the essential point about McLuhan—he is deeply concerned about making an impact, having an effect, making people think and perhaps act. (In this respect he has some affinities with Marx, who also despised philosophers for failing to make an impact on the real world.) Knowing full well that statements published in obscure periodicals (like his own early contributions to Eng. Lit. scholarship) and hedged round with careful qualifications, would have no impact, McLuhan consciously devised a style of discourse which may be inaccurate, sensational, rash, half-thought-out and a hundred other objectionable things, but which at least is

noticed, has an impact, makes people think and opens their eyes and ears. In order to achieve the effects he desired—and that he has been successful is borne out by Dr Miller's excitement when he first came into contact with him—McLuhan (who has no need, I suspect, to be told by Dr Miller just what scientific accuracy is) deliberately overdramatised himself and his thought. In other words: in order to have the beneficial impact which he has had on Dr Miller and others (including myself), McLuhan the scholar *sacrificed* some of the sacred habits of scholarship, descended into the market-place, became a showman, perhaps even a jester or a clown (by, for example, parodying his own slogan into "the medium is the *massage*"). And in doing so he has succeeded in making people take notice and become aware of the truly astonishing revolution which the electronic mass media represent. He has made even Dr Miller grateful for the way in which he alerted him to the properties of television! And for that one is called a liar? Greater patience surely hath no man than Marshall McLuhan who abandoned the purity of ivory-tower scholarship in order to stimulate debate, and, in effect, to inspire such fine (if ungrateful) artists in the mass media as Dr Miller.

Between Hope & Nihilism

Chiaromonte's "Paradox of History"—By GORONWY REES

NICOLA CHIAROMONTE'S short but important book¹ is an elaboration of certain ideas which he originally discussed in an article published in *Tempo Presente*, the monthly journal which he edited with Ignazio Silone. They were provoked by a reconsideration of Tolstoy's view of history, as presented by him in *War and Peace*, and in particular by the analysis of it given by Isaiah Berlin in his admirable essay "The Hedgehog and the Fox". Signor Chiaromonte was given an opportunity of developing them further when he was invited to deliver the Christian Gauss lectures in Princeton in 1966, which now appear here in book form.

The long period, some fourteen years in

all, during which these ideas have continued to haunt Chiaromonte, is perhaps evidence of something obscure and incommunicable in them, which still remains even after they have been given so much thought. It is not so much that they refuse to surrender their secret as that they refuse to conform to any single formulation, and display themselves in a confusion of different versions and, sometimes, in the most unexpected places.

Chiaromonte takes his starting point from the situation which faced the young Fabrice del Dongo on the field of Waterloo, as described by Stendhal in the famous opening chapters of *La Chartreuse de Parme*. It will be remembered that the incidents of the battle were so utterly at variance with any image Fabrice has formed of a great military and historical event that he doubts whether it can be a real battle at all. Equally, the heroes of

¹ *The Paradox of History: Stendhal, Tolstoy, Pasternak and Others*. By NICOLA CHIAROMONTE. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £2.00.

the day, Marshal Ney, Prince de la Moskowa, "the bravest of the brave", or Napoleon himself, so little resemble those of his young and innocent imagination that he has difficulty in recognising them even when he meets them face to face.

What bewilders Fabrice, of course, is the contrast between myth and reality; between, on the one hand, the idea of Waterloo as an event which will realise all his dreams, and, on the other, the wholly meaningless, absurd, and arbitrary succession of incidents which constitute the reality of his own experience. At what point, if any, do they acquire that weight of meaning and significance which men attribute to the Battle of Waterloo, and how can they possibly have any part in those tremendous consequences, for Europe and the world, which (according to history as it is written) followed directly as a result of Napoleon's defeat?

Tolstoy himself greatly admired Stendhal's account of Waterloo and when he came to write his own great masterpiece, he addressed himself to what was essentially the same problem as the one which had so troubled the young Fabrice del Dongo. But where Stendhal was content to state the problem, Tolstoy, according to Professor Berlin a fox who wanted to be a hedgehog, was also concerned to find an answer to it, so that *War and Peace* is not only a novel but an enquiry into the validity of our faith in the meaning of history; a faith which, in Chiaromonte's words, "served as a fundamental credo of the nineteenth century" and now appears to perform the same function in the twentieth.

IT IS A STRIKING FEATURE of Chiaromonte's examination of this faith that he takes his evidence, not from historians, or philosophers of history, but from novelists; Victor Hugo, Roger Martin du Gard, Malraux, and Pasternak are brought in as witnesses as well as Stendhal and Tolstoy. His justification for this procedure is in itself an interesting one; that

in every important work of fiction we find, implicit or explicit, well amalgamated with the narrative or clumsily appended to it, a definite structure of ideas. There is no modern novel of any scope that does not imply a certain view of society, of history, of the world. "It is not sufficient to be a man, one must be a system", said Balzac.

Chiaromonte might have added that historians are not exactly notorious for exploding the pretensions of their own subject, while it is precisely the load of seemingly arbitrary

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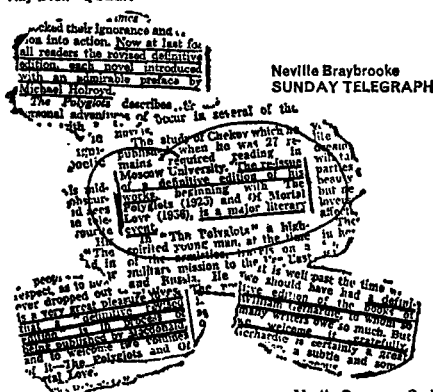
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detail and incident accumulated by the novelist which most effectively exposes its fallacies.

Most of all, of course, the novelist depicts history as seen from the inside, from within the skin of the orange. His characters have the immediacy and spontaneity of those who are the subject, not the object, of historical experience, and what they are aware of is not the working out of a plan, purpose, design or rational connection of cause and effect, which the historian tries, or pretends, to discover in history. It is, rather, the consciousness of something which, because it is a free agent, is by definition undetermined, arbitrary in its operation, and sees none of the connections of cause and effect which the historian claims to discover in his actions. "Is it possible," Kutuzov asks himself, "that it was I who let Napoleon reach Moscow? But when, when was such a horrible thing decided?"

For Tolstoy indeed Chance is the secret of history; but it is Chance seen as the operation of a secret and mysterious power, of which we have no knowledge except at rare moments of insight and exaltation, like Prince Andrey's when he was lying wounded after the battle of Austerlitz.

There is nothing, nothing certain but the nothingness of all that is comprehensible to us, and in the grandeur of something incomprehensible, but which is, nevertheless, the only thing that matters.

It seems legitimate to think that, in these words, Prince Andrey has smuggled back into history a meaning and a significance which Tolstoy himself has explicitly banished.

This is a subterfuge; we must accept, however, that for Tolstoy Chance, in his very peculiar version of it, had succeeded to the seat left vacant by God after his reported death about the middle of the nineteenth century. (It is one of the riddles of history that historians themselves are unable to date this important, and after all, quite recent, event more exactly.) Chance, however, has not given to us any of the revelations of its own nature or the mode of its operations which God vouchsafed to earlier generations. Rather, we are continuously, and bewilderingly, confronted by the evidence of known facts, which, since they obey no laws are not reducible to any intelligible order, and affront any rational expectations one might have of the future, with an explosiveness and violence for which there cannot be any rational explanation or justification.

ONE COULD, OF COURSE, THINK of many contemporary political struggles which would provide evidence for such a proposition.

Chiaromonte prefers to concentrate on an event rather more remote in time; the outbreak of the first World War in August 1914. It was one of which one might legitimately say that, having read much of what historians have to say about it, one is unable to find any sufficient cause for it, and is confident that it totally confounded all the hopes and expectations, both rational and irrational, of all the belligerents who were involved in it. And just as Tolstoy destroyed the credibility of the great myth of Napoleon, as the Man of Destiny, "the *Weltgeist* on horseback", who decided the fate of Europe and the world, so (in Chiaromonte's view) we see the credibility of great social forces as agents of historical change destroyed in Roger Martin du Gard's novel, *Les Thibault*; to quote his own words, "the last great novel in the classical 19th-century manner."

One would not like to quarrel with Chiaromonte about that sentence; his argument is far too interesting for that. It is, however, worth notice that it was the failure of the international socialist movement to prevent the outbreak of the first World War which concentrated his attention on the problem of how far reason, order, plan, understanding, have any role to play in history; the particular

case made him realise that there was a more general problem involved.

The three heroes, if one may call them so, of *Les Thibault*, each in his own way represents the belief that reason is operative in human history. The father, Oscar, devout, *bien pensant* Catholic, still retains the faith that the hand of God is at work in the world's affairs. His elder son, Antoine, a distinguished doctor, accepts that human action is subject to the kind of laws which, in their consistency and regularity, resemble those which science discovers in nature. His younger brother, Jacques, a revolutionary socialist, believes that human beings can form and achieve purposes which will realise man's innate desire for justice and liberty. All three forms of belief are confounded by the unparalleled violence and barbarism of the first World War, which achieves a dimension which no human will, or collection of wills, had ever contemplated. Both the Thibault sons die defeated, and in circumstances which make a mockery of their most profound convictions.

To this account of the vanity of human action, Chiaromonte opposes the vision of history which we find in the novels of André Malraux. In these, no trace remains of the humanist and nationalist illusions of which

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both the Thibault brothers were in their different ways victims. Just because these have been so ruthlessly exposed, for the heroes of these novels no choice remains but activity for its own sake, the exercise of pure will uncontaminated by any form of morality except the morality of action. It is the effort to impose on history a form and an order which it does not possess, and as such is necessarily doomed to defeat. The purposes which the actors set themselves are almost irrelevant to their actions, just because they are so absurdly incommensurate with the only means which the hero has for achieving them. This is a form of nihilism which, in the case of Malraux's heroes, adopts the posture of "revolutionary socialism", but (as Chiaromonte quite rightly points out) any other posture might have done just as well.

Unlike Stendhal or Tolstoy, neither Malraux nor Roger Martin du Gard offers any possibility that man can ever meet with anything except defeat, because neither makes provision for the activity of what Stendhal describes as "the uncomfortable gift, father of so many ridiculous actions, called 'the Soul'." For this awkward intruder into history, Pasternak makes provision, and it is this presence in *Dr Zhivago* which lends the novel a poetry

and a kind of optimism which are strangely at variance with the actual course of events, and Zhivago's own fate, as Pasternak describes them. Indeed, strictly speaking they have no business to be there at all, and this contributes a certain ambiguity in *Dr Zhivago* which is not present in any of the other novels which Chiaromonte discusses.

The Paradox of History is one of those books, unfortunately rare, of which one could reasonably wish that they were longer, for Signor Chiaromonte's central theme has so many different facets that both he and his readers are drawn into paths which, within the limits he has chosen, cannot be pursued to their end. But this is only to say that he has set himself a problem which is central to the contemporary human predicament and will continue to be so, as long as men are unable to resolve it. Nicola Chiaromonte does not claim to have done so; what he has done brilliantly and convincingly is to show how much light on the problem there is to be found in the novelists he has selected for discussion. It is an additional merit that, in doing so, he has also, almost incidentally, helped to restore to the novel as a literary form something of the dignity and significance which it is in danger of losing today.

Beside the seaside

1

The whole scene I reduce to a postcard
Which will put me in mind of the seaside,

Or else I dissolve it in my mouth like
The red letters in a stick of rock—

This is the trip my midnight bathers take,
This is where pier and promenade embark.

2

Indeed, I wish I was there to prove
The effluence of the splintered tide,
The fun palace's darkening arcade,

Or to tune in to that submarine
Hearsay—the noises-off which sailors even
And men on the land catch nothing of.

Michael Longley

AUTHORS & CRITICS

In Defence of English

By David Lodge

JOHN HOLLOWAY'S "Thoughts after Dover Wilson" [ENCOUNTER, April 1970] is only the latest in a series of recent utterances by university teachers of English expressing deep misgivings about the educational value of their subject. Any healthy academic discipline should, of course, constantly be reappraising its practice and objectives; but reappraisal, in English Studies, seems to have turned into hand-wringing. And this, in turn, encourages the prejudice against the subject which exists outside the universities. Just this morning, for instance, I have been reading Mr Rayner Heppenstall's review-article, "The Light Touch" in a recent ENCOUNTER, which begins:

Most people seem to like Peacock, especially if they "discover him for themselves" after, say, thirty. If one first comes across him in an Eng. Lit. sort of way, at school or (worse) at university, one is likely enough to be caught up in the Romantic age as a whole, to see merely an amusing man in the shadow of Shelley and Byron. . . . Even then one may "re-discover" him later, and the experience is commonly found to be pleasurable, even by many of those who remain professionally caught up in the Eng. Lit. world.

As it happens, I first encountered Peacock in my "A"-Level syllabus, and read him with a delight and enthusiasm which has not deserted me since. But Mr Heppenstall's assertion is not of a kind which can be debated on the level of evidence: it is an emission of spleen, a rhetorical indulgence in the stock notion that the academic study of literature, especially English literature, is somehow pleasure-killing. This notion is the crutch which sustains a good many non-academic reviewers in their labours, and it is sad to see Mr Holloway encouraging it, when his own review-article on Dickens in the same issue of ENCOUNTER demonstrates so well, by

comparison with Mr Heppenstall's, the advantages of a trained and disciplined critical intelligence. In fact, I cannot believe that Mr Holloway is as disillusioned as he makes himself out to be in "Thoughts after Dover Wilson." But, as someone in the same occupation, I feel that his thoughts, in the present climate of opinion, should not stand unchallenged.

THE ONLY EMINENT TEACHER of English who seems prepared, these days, to defend the subject, is Dr Leavis; and he continues to do so on precisely those grounds in which Mr Holloway and other like-minded commentators—for example George Steiner and Graham Hough—have lost faith. It is no coincidence, I think, that all four men are (or were) Cambridge dons, for Cambridge men are prone to believe that their University is, if not the only one, the only one that matters. There was a time when, as regards English Studies in this country, this was almost true; the period, roughly, from 1924, when I. A. Richards published *The Principles of Literary Criticism*, to 1953, when *Scrutiny* ceased publication. It is certainly not true now. Yet the equation of Cambridge English with all English Studies underlies a good many of the doubts and questions raised by Mr Holloway and his colleagues.

For example: after confessing that none of his students has ever known a word about bibliography, he asks: "how many university English Departments possess such a thing [as a hand-press]?" The question, I take it, is rhetorical. But the Department in which I was educated has a hand-press, and so does the Department in which I have taught subsequently. Both Departments offer optional undergraduate courses in Bibliography and Paleography (very popular at present, I observe). I believe these are not the only two such Departments in the country.

This, however, is a small debating point. Mr Holloway is not seriously suggesting that bibliography could be the salvation of English Studies. He is using it, and Dover Wilson's enthusiasm for it, as a red rag with which to tease and torment those who would justify the large-scale study of English at the universities as an essentially critical discipline. "Work like Dover Wilson's raises fundamental, and gravely neglected, questions about arts studies in our universities." Fundamental these questions may be—but neglected? Surely not. The questions raised by Mr Holloway were raised at the very inception of English Honours

Schools at Oxford and Cambridge, and have been argued about ever since.

The position of those who opposed the introduction of English at Oxbridge was briefly this: that there were facts and there were opinions. That education is concerned with facts, which can be taught and examined, not with opinions, which cannot. That criticism is largely a matter of opinion, except where it is concerned with the relatively straightforward problems of interpretation presented by texts in an ancient or modern foreign language. That the criticism of one's own vernacular literature is therefore not a proper university subject: it inevitably degenerates into "mere chatter about Shelley" (to quote the famous comment of the Regius Professor of History in 1887).

The early pioneers of English at the universities reacted to these objections in one of two ways. Either they conceded the argument against criticism, and tried to make their syllabus as factual as possible, with heavy doses of philology, Anglo-Saxon and Middle English, textual study, a strong emphasis on literary history, and a rigorous exclusion of the heady excitements of modern literature; or, following in the footsteps of Arnold and Sidgwick, they defiantly cultivated the critical approach to literature, justifying it as, in Mr Holloway's words,

a vitally rewarding and humanising experience in the widest sense . . . which enriches and deepens the psyche as a whole, through the medium simply of direct and intimate contact with the products of a great creative mind.

Roughly speaking, the first of these reactions prevailed at Oxford, the second at Cambridge. In "Thoughts after Dover Wilson", Mr Holloway is largely playing off the first set of attitudes against the second. English, he suggests, is compromised by claiming to be "intensely humanising, *without the grind*—without that is, some amassment of specialist knowledge." If this is a fair description, he argues, then English should be part of every student's broader education, not the exclusive province of a large body of specialists; if it is not, then English must be able to claim some specialised intellectual discipline. The orthodox answer to this latter demand—"the critical activity"—will not satisfy Mr Holloway, because this activity is "a skill independent of learning, a knowing-how without any knowing that."

Here I believe Mr Holloway commits a fallacy which underlay the original objections to English as a university subject, summarised above: the fallacy that there is nothing parti-

cularly difficult about understanding literary texts in one's native modern vernacular. I. A. Richards exposed this fallacy very thoroughly in his *Practical Criticism* (1929), a book based directly on his teaching experience; and the great achievement of Richards and later *alumni* of the Cambridge English School, such as Leavis and Empson, was their demonstration that learning how to read is not a skill that is mastered in secondary school, and their contribution to the refinement and development of that skill. This enterprise generated an intellectual revolution of international scale, loosely called the "New Criticism." But in Cambridge itself it tended to become methodologically static, and to be overshadowed, especially through the influence of Leavis and *Scrutiny*, by an increasing emphasis on the "humanising" function of literary studies, and hence upon evaluation and discrimination rather than interpretation and elucidation. Only by equating all critical activity with this particular *kind* of critical activity can Mr Holloway claim that it is a "moral study that . . . seems nevertheless to have some tendency towards ingraining a certain moral defectiveness", discouraging "spontaneity, commitment, enthusiasm . . . with . . . an extended and undiluted diet of judicial assessment." Mr Holloway knows as well as I do that this is not a legitimate equation, because he is himself a living denial of it. His ENCOUNTER essay on "Dickens' Word-World" implies and communicates a certain evaluation of Dickens but, as the title suggests, it does so through the persuasive analysis of Dickens' handling of his verbal medium, analysis that not only enhances our understanding and appreciation of the texts but also leads us to contemplate the problems and mysteries that lie at the heart of all language. In this way literary criticism becomes indisputably a study of and a contribution to human knowledge—very central human knowledge. Knowing *how* is inseparably bound up with knowing *that*.

Mr Keith Dewhurst wrote an article in the *Guardian*, 27 May 1970, also occasioned by the Dickens centenary, which makes an instructive contrast with Mr Holloway's. "I am not sure what to make of Dickens," he wrote, "or what my response to him needs."

When I read a chapter of one of his novels I think that he was the most naturally gifted writer who ever lived, and in the most crucial aspect of writing Dickens had a supremely fertile gift of words. His ability to recreate what he had seen and felt is breathtaking. Yet here is the paradox. After reading Dickens for an hour or two I find that I cannot continue because I simply don't believe in it. His world

is so unreal, his plots so absurd, his outlook is so uninformed and naive that I am not sure what he has to say.

What is wrong about this statement is not Mr Dewhurst's negative response to Dickens' imagination; it is the assumption that he can maintain this response while simultaneously conceding Dickens' mastery of "the most crucial aspect of writing." It is possible that nothing could persuade Mr Dewhurst to give his assent to Dickens' novels—that is a contingency of all non-scientific discourse—but the contradiction (he calls it a paradox) inherent in Mr Dewhurst's position means that the only possible basis on which his response to Dickens could be debated, and perhaps modified, namely Dickens' "word-world", is brushed aside. What we are left with is opinion: mere chatter about Dickens.

AN ANALYTICAL ENGAGEMENT with the word-worlds of great (and not-so-great) writers is, I believe, the basic activity of literary criticism, and one that is self-evidently educational. For it is a condition of our being human that we inhabit a word-world all the time, though we think of it most of the time as a thing-world. Literature exercises and extends our understanding of the problematical relationship between language and reality by providing small, artificial word-worlds in which the flux of the larger one is arrested and ordered for our contemplation. (This ordering may, of course, take the form of questioning conventional notions of order, as Mr Holloway suggests is the case with Dickens.) Whether this

¹ Another product of the Cambridge English School who seems to have lost faith (or is it hope?) in the "humanising" argument for literary studies, is D. J. Enright. Eleven years ago, contributing to a symposium entitled "Why Teach Literature?" he concluded: "Whether at home or abroad, I suppose the answer is—to do good to people." (*Critical Quarterly*, 1, p. 50). The first of his wry maxims, "How to be an Expatriate" (*Encounter*, June 1970) begins: "First, last and foremost: you are out there to make money (a universally acceptable practice) not to do good (one man's good is another man's bad)."

² This justifies the existence of large specialist English schools. I would not deny Mr Holloway's contention that English, just because it is so accessible, should be an auxiliary part of every student's education (in America, of course, it is). But if literature and the study of it is seen as knowledge rather than as experience, there is a real difference between studying four masterpieces and studying forty. Books are made out of other books as well as out of life, and the more books one has read (intelligently) the more one will get out of the next one.

contemplation will make us better human beings is debatable.¹ Probably the answer is that art, like Nature, will humanise those who are disposed to be humanised and de-humanise those who are disposed to be de-humanised. But that there is some basic human need for the ordered imitation of reality seems to be the ultimate and inscrutable justification of all art and the study of it.

I would not, however, wish to restrict the study of literature to close analysis of a few samples, or to claim a central place for English among the humanities with reference to this kind of critical practice alone. The development of English studies has been bedevilled precisely by such attempts to establish an orthodoxy, whereas the fact is that English is an innately pluralistic subject. The boundaries of form and convention and physical presentation which define the individual text and make it such an accessible and rewarding object of study are only artificial and provisional boundaries. Twist the text at another angle—align it with the complete *oeuvre* of the author and his life, or with the work of other contemporary authors or with the history of its genre, or with the cultural context in which it was written, or with the history of its language, or with comparable works in other languages, or with the history of ideas—and the boundaries dissolve, to be replaced by new ones. And in contemplating the text in these new perspectives, the student finds himself drawn into new areas of knowledge and the disciplines pertaining to them: history, philosophy, religion, sociology, psychology, linguistics, anthropology—even bibliography. That the primary materials of this study are in the students' native vernacular does not make his work a soft option: it merely means that instead of grappling with relatively simple problems of meaning he is dealing almost at once with highly complex ones. An able student can move, in the course of three years, to within striking distance of at least some of the frontiers of his subject.²

THE WAY IN WHICH the study of English naturally radiates out into other areas of knowledge makes it fully deserving of the epithet "central"; and the kind of training it affords is not applicable only to the written word in its most hallowed forms. Modern linguistics, for instance, is at last beginning to grapple with the problem of meaning, and is likely to achieve most in this area through cooperation with literary critics, who themselves have much to learn from linguistics if they could only stop being frightened of it. The study of English is a natural starting point for

the study of new, mixed media of communication such as film and television, because it is in criticism of vernacular literature that one finds the most highly developed theory of narrative form, symbolic communication, aesthetic effects and affects. A literary education is clearly one appropriate kind of preparation for work in the interdisciplinary field of cultural studies. And so on.

At many of our universities, English is expanding in this kind of way. Admittedly, the process is slow, erratic, and more improvised than planned. I do not want to fall into the opposite kind of exaggeration to Mr Holloway's and pretend that all is well in the nation's English Departments. But if there is a malaise in English Studies it is not the fault of the subject or of individual teachers (or, for that matter, of the students) but of the whole academic system in which they are placed, a system weighed down with obsolete assumptions, traditions and procedures. If academic structures could be devised flexible enough to match the potentialities of the subject, there would be no malaise. Even in the present imperfect state of affairs, I would not willingly change places with a teacher in any other subject.

A Rejoinder

By John Holloway

MR DAVID LODGE praises my article on Dickens [ENCOUNTER, June 1970], and of course I am glad; but I think his good opinion of the article might have kept him from so bad an opinion of the author. In particular, I am sorry he should associate me with the idea that, as regards English, Cambridge University is "the only one that matters." In large part, the issues I raised preoccupy me, for the very reason that that notion is so far from the truth.

All the same, my impression is that Mr Lodge and I hold similar views over a wide area, and differ in our emphasis where we have differed in our experience. I am glad to learn that Mr Lodge's English Department runs a hand press, and courses in Bibliography, as also Paleography, which are very popular. From the appropriate reference books, I see also that it is easy for Mr Lodge's students to take fully organised courses, given by those with proper professional expertise, in American studies, history, philosophy and several other of the fields of study which he mentions in his article. These are favourable circumstances, and make it quite understandable for a teacher to speak, without doubt or hesitation, of how "the student [of English] finds himself drawn into new areas of knowledge and the disciplines pertaining to them."

Also, at Mr Lodge's University there is the well-known Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, working in association with the English Department. In fact, I have just received a notice from the Centre, and a request (which of course I am happy to agree to) to publicise it among my own students, and thereby encourage them to leave Cambridge in order to enrol for graduate studies at the Centre. The nearest we come (and it is not very near) to such an institution here, is the collection of records of contemporary cultural activities which two of us (one, my disillusioned self) have for some time been building up; steadily and successfully to be sure, but on our own initiative and, up to the present time of writing, at our own expense. Perhaps I might take this opportunity to say that we have made contact with nearly two hundred organisations producing such records, but material from those we have not yet been able to write to will be most welcome if sent to me at the address below.

Be all these points as they may, however, it still behoves both Mr Lodge and myself to reflect occasionally, not on the "rich potentialities" of our subject (that laudatory phrase comes from my article, not his), but on its potentialities for decline and points of weakness. If we do so, one thing that emerges seems to be that I am a more out-and-out champion of English studies than he is. I do not rest the case for the centrality of English studies just on the idea that they are "innately pluralistic." Some other subjects are that too; and moreover, study of one's native literature seems to me to raise the supremely educative question (briefly, the question *What Matters?*) more insistently, and more available, than anything else does. So I attach more weight than Mr Lodge to the evaluative side, and mean rather more by the word "central" than he; though at the same time we agree in the matter of how knowledge enters those studies also.

If I see another fallacy in Mr Lodge's position, it is where he sees one in mine: saying, that I see "nothing particularly difficult about understanding literary texts in one's native vernacular." No, no. If I am known at all in English studies, it would be, I think, for writing rather hard books and articles, and giving rather hard lectures, just because such difficulties have especially interested me. But I distinguish between difficulty, and inescapable difficulty. One distinctive thing about English studies is that it is very possible for the student simply to overlook how he is sometimes not equipped for what he is trying to do. If the linguist is ignorant of a word, or the scientist ignorant of a technique or a formula, work necessarily comes to an abrupt halt until the defect is supplied. In literary studies the difficulties *may well be greater*, but they do not necessarily make themselves felt in the same absolutely inescapable way; and I see this as a "potentiality for decline" upon which every teacher of English should reflect.

Matthew Arnold said: "The judgement which forms itself *along with fresh knowledge*, is the

valuable one." In my article, I began to explore two corollaries of that unforgettable insight. First, that the very thing which gives English studies their especial value—the demand they unremittably make on us to seek excellence, reflect on its nature, and know why it matters—can become a corruption of itself. This happens when constant evaluating induces self-confidence and self-righteousness; when it turns into a self-parodying routine; or when, at first perhaps merely happening by chance to lack the varied knowledge which comprehension requires, it comes in the end actually to resist the challenge of mastering and applying such knowledge. All these matters, taken together, I pointed to as a "risk of impoverishment." I think that stands.

THERE IS ANOTHER SIDE TO THIS, which brings in the second point I had in mind. My own experience is that many, indeed most, students of English do not want to be consistently evaluating; and that some of the defects I have just referred to come in because there is a tendency to press them into what is not, beyond a certain point, congenial. Put this another way: many students, faced with all the splendours and severity of the "critical discipline", seem to me to want to come out with the words: "but show me something which is within my powers." So, for this reason also there are "perhaps strong arguments" for a more varied diet. Mr Lodge's students, as I noted earlier, already have many opportunities for variety of diet.

MY SECOND QUESTION was: If an English course may be the better for offering at least some avenues ancillary to the discipline of criticism, corrective of its weaker tendencies, or in part simply independent of it—what had they best be? Here I am not met by what Mr Lodge has to say. I should like something more positive, more articulated, and more *within the subject* of literature, than simply to envisage the student's being "drawn into" some or all of the seven or more independent disciplines which he had in mind. I am not over-anxious to claim that any major part of the strength of English is the ease with which English leads outside itself. That is too much like the people who have encouraged me to take lucrative appointments in America, because all that money makes it so easy to fly to Europe in the vacations—I am in Europe in the vacations. Not that I am against any of that being-drawn-into, but I had a more local problem in mind. Though still not local enough to take further, in a mere rejoinder.

AUTHORS

Graham Petrie is a young Scottish writer. He has taught in Canada but is at present spending a sabbatical year in Italy, working on a novel. He has published film criticism and essays on eighteenth century fiction; his book *The Cinema of Francois Truffaut* was recently published by Zwemmer.

J. H. Plumb is Professor of Modern History, University of Cambridge. His books include *England in the Eighteenth Century* (1950), *Crisis in the Humanities* (1964), and *Death of the Past* (1969).

Martin Esslin is Head of Radio Drama in the B.B.C. Among his books are *The Theatre of the Absurd* (1962) and *The Peopled Wound* (1970). He has written for *ENCOUNTER* on Brecht (August 1966 and September 1968) and Pinter (March 1968).

Goronwy Rees writes regularly for *ENCOUNTER*, as a columnist (*R*) and critic. Among his books are *A Bundle of Sensations* (1960), *The Multi-Millionaires* (1961), and *The Rhine* (1968). He has just completed an autobiographical memoir entitled *A Chapter of Accidents*, which will be published later this year by Chatto & Windus (London) and The Library Press (New York).

Henry Fairlie's article, in last month's *ENCOUNTER*, is a slightly revised and expanded version of the one that appeared originally in the *Washington Post*. . . .

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LETTERS

Lenin's Fantasy

IN HIS INTERESTING essay on "Lenin's Fantasy" [ENCOUNTER, December] Lewis S. Feuer makes the mistake of disregarding Mach's "principle of the economy of thought" (a variant of Occam's razor) which, as he demonstrates (p. 28), was completely misunderstood by Lenin. Professor Feuer interprets Lenin's fanatical atheism and the vehement rejection of the epistemology of Ernst Mach and his Russian disciples in terms of psychoanalysis, viz: as "the projection of a fixated emotion of generational rebellion", and as a "re-enactment of Lenin's rebellion against his father's authority and religious devotion" (p. 29). The truth is less involved. Professor Feuer comes nearer to it with his remark that Lenin attacked the philosophical views of the Machist Bogdanov when the latter was leading a faction opposed to Lenin.

Lenin was primarily a practical politician; prior to about 1907 he had never evinced much interest in philosophical argument. Early in 1908, a few months before he started writing *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* ("the most lamentable of his literary productions", to quote Adam B. Ulam), he referred to himself, in a letter to Gorky, as a "rank-and-file Marxist" who was "not well read in philosophy" and "not sufficiently competent to publish anything hastily" on philosophical problems. In 1904, when Bogdanov and Lunacharsky, then his political allies, began to develop philosophical concepts combining Marxist theory with Machian epistemology, Lenin took little notice. He was critical of their attempt to modify the orthodox Marx-Engels version of materialism but did not publicly inveigh against them. Things changed when, after the defeat of the first Russian Revolution, the alliance came to grief over day-to-day issues: Bogdanov had become the chief spokesman of the group of "Otzorists" or Recallers who put the stress on illegal activities and advocated the recall of the Bolshevik deputies from the *Duma*. This was absolutely contrary to Lenin's own position; and to meet this challenge to his authority within the party and to his tactical line he pronounced, on the basis of some hastily acquired, very sketchy knowledge of the philosophical questions involved, his anathema against Bogdanov and his "Empiriomonism". He went further and construed some link between this alleged abandonment of orthodoxy and the Recallers' "adventurist" policies. By exposing Bogdanov as a renegade from Marxist doctrine Lenin hoped to destroy his influence in the Bolshevik ranks. In such straightforward tactical

considerations, and not in the influence of the subconscious, is the motivation for Lenin's pseudo-philosophical diatribe to be sought.

Professor Feuer also seems to see the subconscious at work in Lenin's error in attributing the phrase "dialectical materialism" to Marx instead of Plekhanov (p. 25). However, the statement "Modern materialism is essentially dialectic" does occur in the Introduction to Engels's *Anti-Duehring* which was written with Marx's approval and cooperation. There was thus nothing very original in the formula introduced by Plekhanov, and there is no reason to hold "the intensity of Lenin's revolt against Plekhanov" responsible for this minor terminological inaccuracy.

S. F. KISSIN

Reading

IN HIS COURTEOUS LETTER Mr Kissin sets forth the view that Lenin's vehement hostility to Machian philosophy was primarily a tactical stance in a political battle. Until Lenin undertook to discredit Bogdanov's faction, he had not been (in Mr Kissin's opinion) much interested in philosophical argument.

Actually the evidence, I think, shows rather that Lenin's emotional antagonism was always evoked by idealistic, Kantian, or Machian philosophical ideas. As early as 1899, Lenin wrote from his Siberian exile to his brother Dmitri that he was becoming a firm opponent of neo-Kantianism, and to his older comrade Potressov that he was "becoming more and more incensed" by the neo-Kantianism of Russian scholars. The question, Lenin wrote, should be taken "seriously". He read such neo-Kantian authors as Rudolf Stamler, and he ordered a copy of F. A. Lange's *Kantian History of Materialism*. To be sure, Lenin felt keenly what he called his "lack of philosophic education"; but he intended to write on these themes when he had done "some more reading". Meanwhile, he followed closely the debates on philosophy within the Social Democratic Party.

For several years, tactical political considerations induced Lenin to restrain himself from assailing Machian ideas. As Nikolay Valentinov wrote, Lenin "controlled" the emotional repugnance which Bogdanov's philosophy aroused in him so long as he had to work with Bogdanov in a political alliance. The two Bolshevik leaders had a tactical understanding to regard philosophy as a "neutral" field. But Lenin chafed under this restriction. Several years before his rupture with Bogdanov, Lenin broke in 1904 with Valentinov in a highly emotional scene in which he upbraided the latter in such unbridled terms that Valentinov's wife wondered that he had not thrown Lenin into the Lake of Geneva. Lenin raged at Valentinov, saying among other things that his Machian thoughts were far worse than going to a brothel. Machian epistemology quite clearly stirred strange associations in Lenin's mind. When in 1906 Lenin

sent Bogdanov a "little letter on philosophy" which took up three notebooks, Lenin called it (in a letter to Gorky) a "declaration of love". Bogdanov found it so full of personal insults that he returned it to Lenin. In the interests of their political collaboration, he preferred to regard it as unwritten and unread. As Bertram D. Wolfe has pointed out, Lenin kept a public silence about Bogdanov's philosophy because of his political bloc with him; so much the greater therefore was the "violent intensity" of his assault when, after five years, the need for the "enforced and humiliating abstinence" was terminated. All of which brings us back to the question which I tried to answer: What were the emotional grounds in Lenin's own personality which led him to respond with such vehemence to any departure from materialism?

VARIOUS EMOTIONAL VECTORS evidently coalesced in Lenin's psyche around the doctrine of materialism. His reaction against his father, the school inspector and religious believer, seems to account for the unusual bitterness which Lenin showed, quite apart from Bogdanov's philosophy, against bourgeois teachers as police officers in disguise, as salesmen of theology. Such metaphors as the "kisses" of the idealists and the "concubinage" of

the professors suggest other motivational sources; but I have not tried to unravel them, and have written of Lenin's fixated emotion of generational rebellion as only one such component.

To Russian Marxists it would have been well-known that Plekhanov had invented the expression "dialectical materialism". It is therefore very strange that the very first page of *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* begins with Lenin writing that it was "hardly possible that all these people [Machians] should be innocent of the fact that scores of times Marx and Engels termed their philosophy dialectical materialism"; later in the book he asserts that "Marx often termed his viewpoint dialectical materialism". This kind of mistake made by a man immersed in Marxist literature cannot be regarded as a "terminological inaccuracy". It is more like the case of the Biblical scholar who said that, of course, the term monotheism occurs frequently in the Scriptures. (It doesn't.) And since Lenin had gone through such an emotional upheaval with regard to Plekhanov, the inventor of "dialectical materialism", we may infer that Lenin's distortion was the outcome of a desire to repress Plekhanov's contribution.

LEWIS S. FEUER

University of Toronto

The Solar Revolution

John Weightman's "Australotropism"—By RICHARD BOURRET

I JUST HAD the good fortune to come upon John Weightman's fascinating article *The Solar Revolution* in the December number of *ENCOUNTER*. I think he has merely begun—though exceedingly well—to open a subject worthy of extensive investigation. From the standpoint of literature and of history he just noted the highlights. But from the standpoint of psychology and sociology the matter is least complete since he said nothing about the psychological *why* nor of its relation to the much laboured topic of Alienation. Before offering a few speculations of my own, permit me to cite some of my own general observation on the subject of *heliophilia* or *australotropism*. (I shall use the latter term, despite its pomposity, since I think it is a little closer to the essence of the phenomenon in question.)

The subject means a good deal to me since for many years I have been, if I may say so, a sufferer from it. I spent my childhood in Florida, to which I returned in adulthood, and later, more lengthily, in Southern California. Other periods

were spent in Eastern and Western Canada, and five years of my recent life were spent in Cuba. Thus I have been able to assess my own australotropism under a variety of conditions, both favourable and unfavourable to it.

My first thought is to question the tuberculosis which Weightman attributed to Camus, D. H. Lawrence and—was it Gide? As you know, "tuberculosis" was a diagnosis rather loosely given, till recent times, for a much greater variety of causes—often enough, no doubt, psychic in origin (insofar as one considers anything "psychic in origin").

Of the writers he mentioned who pioneered the Côte d'Azur in summer, Huxley, D. H. Lawrence, Maugham and Hemingway, it is interesting to note that the first ended up in California, the second in New Mexico, the third in Nice (St Jean Cap Ferrat, "*Presque Isle de Rêve*"—as the postal frank adds), and the last in Key West and Havana. (I used to live a kilometre from his Cojimar *Old Man* site). Thus australotropism is not transient: it is a life-long condition.

Other writers come to mind at once who should be investigated in the pursuance of this new pathological entity, australotropism, e.g. T. E. Lawrence, Graham Greene, and Leonid Andreev. Graham Greene has shown an absolutely remarkable consistency in recent years in setting his stories in locales full of australotropic significance. I think Greene may repay further study since he also exhibits the related religious problem in full evidence. For this is, I suspect, the other side of the coin. Consider Huxley—hunting for a pantheistic god all his later life; D. H. Lawrence, seeking a special kind of southern benefaction: Hemingway—unusually irreligious for an American—hunting, often literally, elusive meridional satisfactions. Leonid Andreev, finally, I recommend for one story in particular: *Lazarus*. (Returned from the realm of death, Lazarus spends the time restored to him physically and mindlessly seeking the sun.)

One might jump to the almost facetious conclusion that my own association here in Paris with the Institut d'Astrophysique looks symptomatic of the malady in question. It is adventitious, I assure you, as I certainly do not work in Solar Physics. But there is a grain of truth lurking ever there, since my first scientific interest was meteorology. Admittedly, I had an early inclination toward the darker German romantics in the Arts; but, excepting the music of Bach, all my "Northern" tastes left me many years ago in favour of what the Germans themselves—early sufferers from the affliction, it would seem—called the *Sehnsucht nach Süden*. This particular sentiment is almost archetypically expressed in the poem of Friedrich Hölderlin—whose title I have forgotten but which goes something like (maybe you can re-construct the fractured remnants of German!) at the end:

*Weh mir, wo nehm ich, wenn
Es Winter ist, die Blumen, und wo
Den Sonnenschein,
Und Schatten der Erde?
Die Mauern stehn
Sprachlos und kalt, im Winde
Klirren die Fahnen.*

The earlier part talks of "zitronen" and similar nostalgic whimsies. Since Hölderlin went around the bend, he might be a rewarding subject for investigation in this light.

In the realm of film art a few interesting illustrations might be mentioned, though they seem ephemeral in relation to written material. Does some of the charm of Humphrey Bogart, Peter Lorre, and even Sidney Greenstreet derive from their very memorable performances in films with tropical settings such as *The African Queen*, *Casablanca*, and the like? As for my own preferences, whatever they may be worth in the investigation, the two films which—by several orders of magnitude—have impressed me beyond all others have been: *Orfeo Negro*, set in Rio during carnival, and Bergman's *The Seventh Seal*. This latter is a curious inversion of the australo-

tropic syndrome, for it fascinates by its sheer horror for the australotrope.

John Weightman mentions St. Tropez, as an australotropic cynosure. Quite true. But speaking of fascinating antitheses, did he ever visit the medieval mountain-top town of Gassin not a dozen miles from St. Tropez? In winter it is the very aesthetic north-pole for the australotrope.

To conclude, then, with a few theoretical speculations: I suspect that the proper analysis of australotropism is to be found in a special kind of Alienation, an alienation involving both Man and God. The sufferer has an irrepressible intuition that he may break-through in the right southern or tropical setting. The climate, the light, and the people seem to favour it. It is illusory in the sense that one is trying to live on the symbolic plane: but it is not wholly vain, since some real pleasure is derived from such settings. And it is certainly true that dark, cold northern places and their peoples (unless they share the syndrome) are strongly counter-indicated since they exacerbate the symptoms of depression and alienation.

Weightman mentions that Camus considered Paris a Northern town—rather as if he didn't share his view. Take it from another australotrope, it most emphatically is. Where John Weightman lives, from this perspective, is almost like the planet Pluto.

I conclude with the recent good news for the australotropes: the Russians plan to melt much of the ice on the Arctic ocean surface to irrigate central Asia and, as a marvellous by-product, warm the northern hemisphere.

"Where Do We Go From Here?"

RAYMOND FLETCHER [ENCOUNTER, December] may well ask: "Where Do We Go From Here?" From Mr Fletcher's latest ramble in ENCOUNTER, the going would seem to point to the directional dilemma: mind, forwards and to the left; heart, backwards and to the right.

CHARLES BYASS

Newton Wyck,
Blackpond Lane,
Farnham Common,
Bucks

"Paradise" & Women's Lib

JOHN PASSMORE's otherwise rather rational piece on the New Mysticism [ENCOUNTER, November] is flawed by an error of logic. Writing on the mystical implications of Unisex, he makes a brief critical excursion into the field of "Women's Lib." He says that it is the women who suffer from male-female identification. Since sexual actions are directed "indifferently" at either men or women, women are no longer "sexually necessary" and become mere "hangers-on." But, the point of Unisex, which Mr Passmore seems to have missed, is that men are not specifically "sexually

necessary" either. The author seems temporarily to have forgotten that women are not always confined to the roles of response and receptivity which he seems to have delegated to them.

He goes on to say that "it is Eve, not Adam who must vanish if the 'original state' of perfect humanity is to be regained; she must take her old place in Adam's rib, no longer separate flesh." This is apparently proved by the fact that women are no longer the most sought-after seed containers and by the fact that it is the girls who dress as boys and not the boys as girls. For some reason, he discounts the long hair and decorative clothes of the boys as factors indicating their "feminization." He neglects the fact that the boys look slender, fragile, effeminate. The ideal of the hairy virile athlete is no longer particularly attractive to either men or women. The girls do, it's true, wear trousers, but I think one of the main reasons for this is that blue jeans are the most practical attire for the style of life of the people Mr Passmore is describing. I invite Mr Passmore to try sitting on the floor in a skirt. Mr Passmore refuses to believe that the ideal of Unisex, whatever one may think or feel about it, is a genuine blurring of roles, and that it is not only traditional femininity, but traditional masculinity which is to be sacrificed.

One final point with which I take issue is the idea that women, in participating in what they see as a revolt against the conception of a "feminine role" are actually taking part in a revolution of which they themselves will ultimately be the victims. Maybe Mr Passmore is right, but I would contend that women must participate in this revolution. They have no choice. Many women are dissatisfied with the options which they feel are open to them in present-day society. From the Victorian Ladies represented by Ibsen's Nora or James' frustrated heroines, to the sometimes violent man-haters (isn't it odd that there's no female counterpart to misogynist?) among modern feminists, nearly everyone seems to agree that something is wrong, that somehow women's lot must be changed. It is true that women must define the goals of the revolution more clearly than they have done to date. They must try to sort out how and in what ways they are different from men, for in the end it is only they who can re-define their own goals, their own roles.

But people like Mr Passmore, with his outworn prejudices and his occasional convenient blind-spot, are not helping.

ELLEN F. SOULLIÈRE

*Chung Chi College,
The Chinese University of Hong Kong*

I SYMPATHISE WITH a great many of the feelings which lie behind the Women's Liberation Movement; elsewhere in my book I comment specifically on the way women have suffered at the hand of perfectibilists. At the same time, I still suspect that unisexuality is a male racket, which only too often leaves women carrying the baby. True

enough, the unisexual males have in some degree effeminised themselves; they no longer attempt to live up to an athletic ideal. (Nor have I ever done so myself, so far as that goes!) But the beards they so prominently display are scarcely a common feminine adornment; as for long hair and jewellery this does no more than revert to the old tradition that it is the male who makes a peacock of himself. I doubt whether an increase in homosexual relations, either, will in the end redound to the advantage of women.

When a woman chooses to wear jeans for convenience, because she cannot otherwise engage in particular tasks or participate in a particular way of life, it would be absurd to object. What I dislike is the deliberate blurring of distinctions merely for the sake of *uniformity*. (Uniformity is not the same thing as equality of opportunity.) Many people object to the unisexualists because they are "different." My ground of opposition, rather, is that they are obsessed by the ideal of uniformity. I don't believe that women should think of themselves or should allow themselves to be thought of—except for those who enjoy doing so, and who add thereby a certain diversity and colour to life—only as "sex-objects." But I also don't believe that they should be content, either, to be imitation-men—even if men make it easier for them by becoming imitation-women. If it is an "outworn" prejudice to prefer diversity to uniformity I am glad to be counted with the old fogeys.

JOHN PASSMORE

*Department of Philosophy,
Australian National University,
Canberra.*

Passmore's "Paradise Now"

MR AZIZ ESMAIL seems to me to be justified in his comments [ENCOUNTER, February] on Professor John Passmore's attempt to link the "new mystics" with the older mystics. But he does not go far enough. It was not simply that the preparation for the journey of the mystic of old was "accompanied by stringent ethical discipline." The results too of the journey had strong ethical overtones. This, I submit, is a major difference between traditional religious mysticism and modern drug-induced mysticism. Jewish, Christian, and Muslim mystics had their own ethical awareness heightened by mystical experience and were often able to communicate this aspect of their experience to others. The "false" mystics—for example the followers of Shabbetai Zvi and Jacob Frank in the Jewish tradition—were shown to be "false" partly because of their resultant abrogation of traditional ethical precepts.

Professor Passmore claims that there is a "broader sense of mysticism" than the one traditionally associated with the religious mystic. What in fact he does, however, is to *narrow* the meaning of mysticism by excluding the ethical component.

(Rabbi) DAVID GOLDSTEIN

*The Liberal Jewish Synagogue,
London*

Tarantara, tarantara!

IN YOUR comments ("In the Margin: A Reading of The Black Panther", ENCOUNTER, January) you may have missed an epidemic of British humour. I suggest you re-read *The Pirates of Penzance*. The editors and commentators whose views you (rightly) castigate are undoubtedly humming their Sullivan and chuckling over Gilbert and Lasky.

LAWRENCE A. KOHN

Rochester,
New York

Arabs & Jews

COLIN MACINNES [ENCOUNTER, December] made a valiant attempt to steer a middle course but such are the complexities of this sad conflict that it forms a veritable trap for the well-meaning and the unwary. Allow me, Sir, to list various errors of omission and commission, some serious, in his short article:

1. The Arab contribution to Western civilisation is stressed and the Jewish one ignored. One gets the impression that the Koran, and not the Bible, shaped our civilisation.

2. Praise is given to Nasser for his efforts to "concentrate the World's eyes upon a problem they had forgotten and didn't care about. . . ." This, presumably, refers to his war against Israel. But it was King Farouk, and not Nasser, who went to war when his army tried to destroy the nascent

Israel in May 1948 (and created the refugees). Nasser only came on the scene some years later. Are we to assume that King Farouk was moved by the loftiest motives in this adventure? And what were the lofty motives which impelled Nasser to the butchery and use of poison gas in the Yemen? Surely that had nothing to do with Jews or Arab refugees.

3. Neither Saladin nor Nasser were Arabs.

4. The Jews, "having one third of their people murdered, were determined to seize land somewhere and make sure". . . This contradicts his own assertion that Jewish eyes were turned towards Jerusalem for 2000 years. It was not a case of "somewhere." In the early part of this century, Joseph Chamberlain offered Uganda for Jewish settlement. It was turned down by the Zionist Congress because Jews had no historical claim to Uganda—only to their former homeland.

DAVID PREISKEL

London

MacInnes' Uncle Ho

ON OPENING my December ENCOUNTER I find myself confronted by the rather peculiar statement (at the beginning of Colin MacInnes' otherwise unexceptionable piece on Arab-Jewish relations, p. 94), that the death of Ho Chi-Minh, unlike that of most public men, was one of those few to which "the human reaction is of woe," and not of relief.

Would Mr MacInnes care to explain how Uncle Ho differs essentially from Uncle Joe, whose avuncular lustre is now more than a little tarnished, even in the eyes of the faithful, and whose passing certainly occasioned no woe?

THOMAS A. QUINN

Alexandria,
Dunbartonshire, Scotland

Unreconstructed

MAY I, as Founder of the Campaign to Eliminate Meaningless Words from the Public Prints, ask: What does "unreconstructed" mean? I note in the December ENCOUNTER p. 4—"Unreconstructed socialist"; p. 38—"Unreconstructed imperialist". Is it something to do with the American South in 1866? Or Frankenstein? Or Mr Alfred Bester's "Demolished Man"? Or T. E. Hulme—Or . . . ?

D. C. ROSE

London

ED. NOTE: May we refer the Founder to the following: "*un.re.con.struct.ed* adj. 1. not reconstructed. 2. holding to an earlier, outmoded practice or point of view; specif., not reconciled to the Reconstruction. Americanism." *Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language* (1970), p. 1,555.

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Mishan's "Futurism"

I SHARE Mr E. J. Mishan's misgivings about the future that science and technology have prepared for us (ENCOUNTER, March). However, current trends in America do not support his belief that "the prevailing Establishment is well on the way to becoming a Scientific Establishment", or that science's hold on the popular imagination and its influence over the young have grown irresistibly. Science and technology are, in fact, very much on the defensive in their own heartland. The rejection of the *SST* reflects a disillusionment with science and technology that has spread more widely and swiftly than anyone would have supposed was possible less than two years ago. The first landing of a man on the moon marked the high point of science's standing with the public, and everything that has happened in space since then has been greeted with more yawns than applause.

Although we Americans have long been uncritical enthusiasts of technology, we have tended to forget that for most of our history we have given only token support to science as a disinterested pursuit of knowledge. For the past thirty years, of course, we have regarded scientific preeminence as the key to military security and as a status symbol in the cold war. As long as that

attitude prevailed, scientists in all fields could enjoy high summer. But we no longer really fear that our security will be jeopardised by a major Soviet scientific discovery or a technological innovation, and this has brought about a change in climate that has been hard indeed on the scientific and technological community.

It is not only before the public that scientists must defend their cause. They are even obliged to answer rude questions about cost-effectiveness in defence of their budgets at the White House level. A fascinating account of this new and humiliating experience for science administrators appears in the March 5 issue of *Science*. And Dr David, the President's Science Adviser, is publicly lamenting the loss of faith in science: in a recent speech he said, "There are many evidences that society does not believe that technology can be controlled in a rational way. . ."

As for youth, it is clear that its articulate representatives are by no means mesmerised by the mystique of science. They are as disturbed about the prospect of a society dominated by science as Mr Mishan himself. And that may afford some slight hope that "the worse that is yet to come" may not be quite so bad as he fears.

WILLIAM CHAPIN

Alexandria,
Virginia

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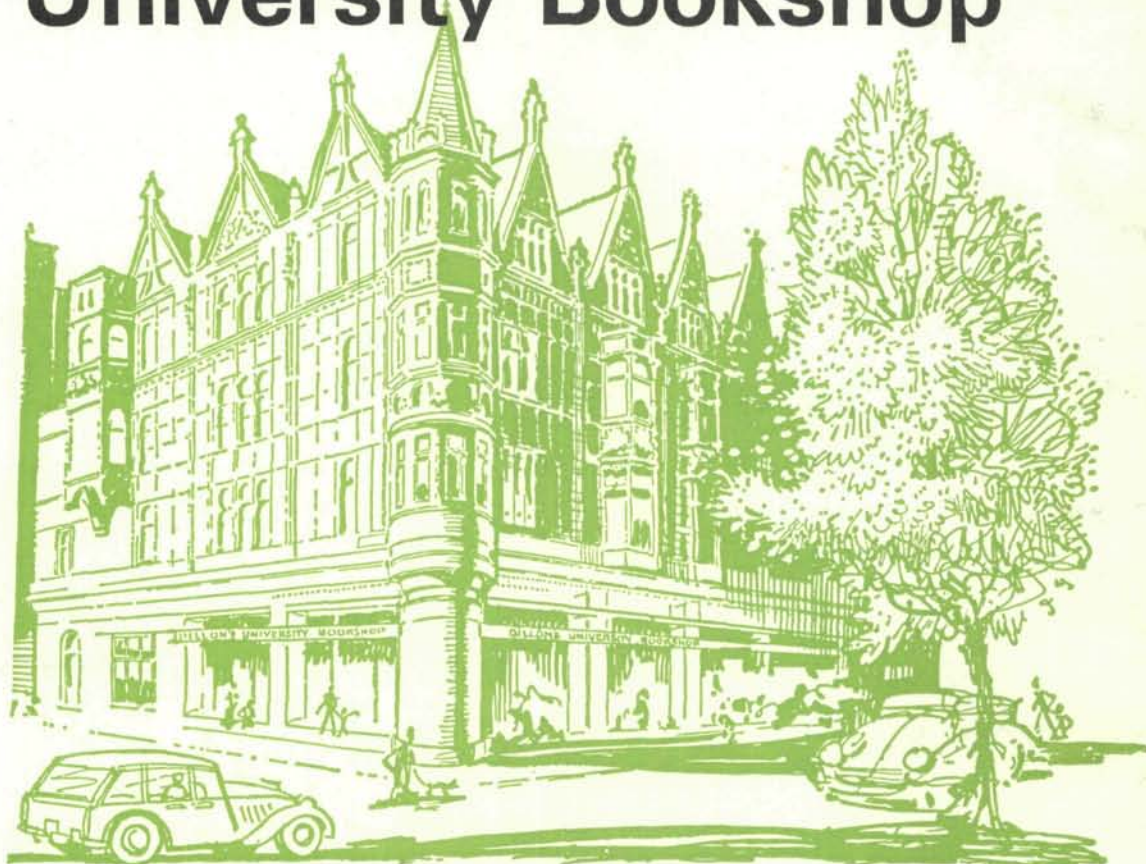
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